

# The Sermons of John Brine

*by John Brine*

*Volume 1*

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*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed  
because of the truth*

— Psalm 60:4

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# SERMON 1

## A DEFENCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION, FROM SOME EXCEPTIONS MADE TO IT BY MR. BRAGGE, AND OTHERS

THE doctrine of Eternal Justification has been lately objected to by Mr. *Bragge*, in some sermons of his on that subject, published with some other sermons preached at *Limestreet*, by several ministers; wherein they propose, according to the general title, to state and defend the great doctrines of the gospel, and to answer such objections as are usually advanced against them.

As I have reason to believe Justification from Eternity to be a scriptural doctrine, I think my self under obligation to appear in its defence; and therefore have determined to communicate my thoughts on that subject in this public manner.

I hope that my attempt to establish, what I apprehend to be a truth of the gospel, though opposed by Mr. *B.* will not be interpreted as an instance of disrespect towards him; who, I am sensible, deserves well of all who are friends to the interest of Christ, for his long standing and eminent service in the church of God.

I am humbly of opinion, that it would have been to much better advantage, if Mr. *B.* had spent those pages which are taken up in treating about the time of Justification, in more fully proving that Christ's righteousness is the matter of it, instead of militating against Justification from eternity; which he cannot but know has been asserted by some able and judicious divines.

It is generally allowed, that in refuting any opinion, it is necessary not only to raise objections against it, and to consider with what difficulties it is clogged; but also to answer the arguments offered in defence of it, by those who believe it a truth. The latter of which Mr. *B.* has wholly neglected: His reasons for it he best knows. I am persuaded he could not be insensible, that there are several arguments made use of, to clear up and defend that important truth, which deserve consideration; and therefore his passing them over in silence gives just reason to conclude, that he thought those arguments too cogent and forcible to admit of a real answer.

This great doctrine has been fully stated, and strongly defended, by Mr. *Gill*, and others before him; whose arguments ought to be

considered, and answers given to them, if any thing is done to purpose in this controversy.

In the vindication of this great point, it is not necessary that I should treat of the matter or form of Justification, for in neither of them do I differ from Mr. B. The matter of our Justification I firmly believe to be the righteousness of Christ and the form of it, the imputation of his righteousness to us: Though I must confess, that some expressions have fell from this gentleman's pen, which do not very well consist with his own sentiments with respect to the form, as we shall have occasion to observe hereafter. Nor is it needful, that I should largely treat of Justification, as it is eternal, seeing it has not long since been let in a good light by the author whose name is mentioned above; that would be *actum agere*, doing the same thing over again, which cannot be judged necessary: Yet it may not be improper to mention briefly those arguments, by which this truth is confirmed. *The method I shall observe, in treating on this subject, will be as follows:*

**First,** I shall enquire what it is to be justified by faith.

**Secondly,** Mention those arguments which have been advanced for the proof of eternal Justification. And,

**Thirdly,** Attend to Mr. B's objections against that point, as well as some additional objections from other persons.

**First, I am to enquire what it is to be justified by faith.** Very great controversies have been moved concerning this. Some affirm, that we are so, in a proper sense; or that faith is the matter and cause of our Justification, as the *Arminians* and *Socinians*: This others justly deny; and assert, that Christ's righteousness alone is the matter and cause of our Justification. I shall here endeavour to prove, that Justification by faith has no causality in this affair; it is not the impulsive, material, nor instrumental cause thereof.

**1. Faith is not the impulsive or moving cause of Justification.** It is an act of pure and free grace, without any motive in the creature: Therefore the Apostle faith, "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7.)" But this benefit would not be of grace, but of works, was our faith the impulsive cause of it: because faith is a work or act of ours, as we learn from the words of Christ: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent (John 6:29.)" Salvation is not of works, in any branch of it; "for by grace are we saved, through faith; that not of our selves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9.)." From whence it is evident that Justification, which is a considerable part of salvation, cannot be

by works. The grace of God eminently appears in contriving the way of our Justification by Christ's righteousness, and in fending him into the world to work out a righteousness for us, in which we stand compleat in his sight: Hence we are said, “to be justified by his grace, that we might made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7.).” No other cause can be assigned why sinners are justified in the sight of God, than his free favour and sovereign pleasure, as the effect of which he determined to justify them in the righteousness of his Son.

## ***2. Neither is faith the matter of our Justification; which appears by these arguments.***

(1.) Because that righteousness, by which we are justified before God, is not our own. All true believers, as the great Apostle did, esteem “their own righteousness and works but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord; and desire to be found in him, not having their own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Philippians 3:9.)” It is manifest, that the Apostle excluded every thing from the business of his Justification which might be accounted his own; and, consequently, faith it self, which though it is a fruit of special grace, may properly be reckoned our own, as we are the subjects of it.

Hence it is that the Holy Ghost speaks of faith as ours: “But the just shall live by his faith (Habakkuk 2:4.).” All dependance on faith for Justification is laid aside by the saints, who are sensible that many deficiencies attend it, and that nothing which is imperfect can recommend them to God.

(2.) A perfect righteousness is required, in order to our Justification in God's sight. His law insists upon a compleat obedience to all its precepts, and condemns where it is wanting; for the language of it is, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them (Galatians 3:10.).” Nor will God, in any instance, act contrary to his own law, which cannot be made void; for it is the eternal standard and rule of righteousness, according to which he will always proceed in judgment. Faith is not a righteousness free from imperfection, and therefore it is not such as is demanded by the Law; wherefore we cannot be justified by it.

(3.) Faith receives that righteousness by which we are justified, and therefore cannot be that righteousness it self. That which is laid hold on, and embraced by faith, must needs be something different from it, as the act and the object are distinct. Christ's righteousness is that to which the faith of a believer looks, and on which it wholly

depends for Justification before God: Therefore faith is not the matter of his justifying righteousness.

(4.) Justification is not by works; for if so, boasting will not be excluded, as it must eternally be in the whole of our salvation: For “it is not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:9.),” as was observed before. Faith is an act and work of ours, and therefore cannot be the matter of our Justification.

(5.) We are justified by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and consequently not by faith. The Apostle expressly asserts that we are justified by his blood; “Much more then being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Romans 5:9. Ver. 19.).” And also, that we are made righteous by his obedience; “As by the offence of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Therefore not by faith.

**3. *Faith is not the instrumental cause.*** In this I am entirely of Mr. Baxter’s opinion, who reasons thus: “If faith be an instrument, it is the instrument of God or man; not of man, for man is not the principal efficient, he doth not justify himself; not of God, for it is not God that believeth” No act of man can be an instrument in those acts of God which are immanent: Justification is such an act; and as Justification is not an act of man’s, or he doth not justify himself, faith cannot be his instrument in an act which is none of his. Upon the whole, it may be strongly concluded, that the *to credere*, or act of believing, is not imputed to us for righteousness, but the object of faith. That this was the Apostle’s meaning, when he thus expresses himself, “for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness, is justly observed by Maresius. “This faith, which is imputed to us for righteousness, ought, to be taken metonymically for Christ being apprehended by faith; inasmuch as faith apprehends and applies the righteousness of Christ to us, not simply, or as altogether another, but as ours: As *Paul*, his own inherent legal righteousness being rejected by him, fought that which is through the faith of Christ, and of God by faith; whence also it is called the righteousness of God, as that fear by which *Jacob* sware, was called the fear of his father; where fear is metonymically put for God, whom he feared.” Thus far he. It is evident, that sometimes by faith Christ must be understood; as when it is said, “but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master (Galatians 3:25.).” That is to say, since Christ, the object of faith, is come into the world, we are no longer under the law as a schoolmaster. Faith is not so much as *causa sine qua non* in this affair, as appears by the eternal justification of the elect: It has not the least concern herein, if Justification is properly taken. But,

If Justification be considered in the knowledge or perception of it, it is by faith; and that is intended when we are said to be justified by faith, if faith is to be taken in a proper sense. By this grace we behold our natural pollution and inability to perform that which is good; the perfection and spirituality of the law; the necessity of an interest in Christ's righteousness, in order to our acceptance with God; the glory and excellency of it: In consequence of which we renounce our own works, and wholly depend upon the spotless righteousness of Christ. At some times also we by faith view that we are all fair, and without spot in the sight of God, as he considers us in the glorious robe of his Son's righteousness, though full of impurities and spots in our selves. In those seasons we are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and can draw nigh to God, as our Father, with a holy freedom and liberty. This is the concern which faith has in our Justification: It beholds and views it, but doth not give being to it, or impute the righteousness of Christ to us, that is God's act without us; and therefore Justification by faith, is only the comfortable knowledge or perception of that gracious privilege.

4. Two reasons may be offered why we are said to be justified by the grace of faith, even in our apprehension thereof.

(1.) Because faith is the eye of our souls, by which we view it, or discern the justifying righteousness of Christ, as imputed to us.

(2.) This grace is of a soul-humbling, and Christ-exalting nature, as Mr. B. observes: "Of all the graces of the Spirit, faith is the most emptying, and accordingly goes poor and indigent to Christ; other graces bring as it were something along with them, whereas faith brings nothing to Christ but a naked back." And so it is eminently suited to the design of God in the Justification of sinners: "For it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed (Romans 4:16.)." It may not be improper to observe here, that it is asserted, that "elect infants dying in infancy, are justified by faith in the habit, though not by faith in the act." If this is true, it follows, that God doth not justify all his elect in one and the same way, but some by the habit, and others by the act of faith: For the proof of which, I am of opinion that no solid argument can be offered. Again, a principle or habit cannot see, or receive an object: Now if Christ's righteousness is to or upon us, in a way of believing, and it cannot be ours till actually received by faith, both which are affirmed by our author; how come elect infants, who die in infancy, to be actually interested in that righteousness, seeing they cannot act faith, and consequently are uncapable of receiving Christ's righteousness? Therefore it must necessarily be concluded, that the gift of Christ's righteousness becomes actually theirs, without any receiving act in them: And unless it can be proved that

God justifies his elect in a different manner, that is to say, some by the habit, and others by the act of faith; the same must be granted concerning those of the elect, who live to riper years. Farther, from hence I cannot but conclude, that no act of faith is necessary to the being of Justification; for, if so, those of the elect who die in infancy, cannot be justified. But why an act of faith should be required to the actual Justification of some of the elect, and not to the Justification of others, I am not able to conceive.

The grace of faith, by which we apprehend our. Justification is of the operation of God, It is an effect of powerful and efficacious grace, and not the produce of human power, skill, or industry. It Is not got, but given, as is evident from those words of the Apostle:

“By grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of your selves, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:9.).” And the grace of God is abundantly displayed, in working faith in our souls; over which, as I take it, a veil is drawn by our author in this exhortation of his, “With all your gettings, get faith.” Dead sinners, or such as are void of spiritual life, cannot act spiritually, and therefore it is not in their power to get faith; and as they have no ability to believe, they have no inclination to it, for their hearts are full of enmity against God. Besides, if faith is got or acquired by men, they make themselves to differ, and have whereof to boast, for then they have something which they did not receive as a gift of free grace; which is constantly denied in scripture, and will never be owned by the saints. Again: It may as well be required of sinners to form divine and supernatural principles in their souls, or to create spiritual life in themselves, as to get faith, for the meaning is the same, which is a work proper to God. Moreover, such an exhortation is not likely to debase and humble proud sinners, or to convince them that they are impotent to good; but rather to swell their haughtiness and pride, and occasion them to Imagine they are possessed of a power which they are not: Thereby also, it is not improbable, but many saints, who are sensible of their weakness, and of the strength of unbelief, may be dejected in their souls, because they cannot, many times when they desire it, exercise that faith which is wrought in their hearts by the Spirit of God. But this by the by.

Secondly, I now proceed to mention those arguments, by which the truth of eternal Justification is confirmed. And,

**1. *Justification is an immanent, and consequently an eternal act.*** This argument must be allowed conclusive, unless it can be proved that Justification is a transient act.

**2. *The elect were by God considered and viewed in Christ from everlasting;*** which is excellently expressed by Dr. Goodwin in these

words: “Look, as God did not, in his decrees about creation, consider the body of *Adam* singly, and apart from his soul, nor yet the soul without the body (I speak of his creation and state thereby) neither should either so much as exist, but as the one in the other: So nor Christ and his church in election, which gave the first existence to Christ as a head, and to the church as his body, which each had in God’s decrees.” Now as God considers his elect in Christ, they are either objects of condemnation, or Justification. The former must be denied, and therefore the latter evidently follows; except, as God beholds the elect in Christ, they are neither objects of condemnation, nor Justification; which is an absurdity that none will admit.

**3. *The elect were blest with all spiritual blessings in Christ before the foundation of the world; and therefore with Justification,*** for that is a spiritual blessing. “This grace by which we are justified, was given us in Christ from eternity, because from eternity God loved us in Christ, and made us accepted in him .”

**4. *When Christ, as a surety, engaged for the elect, they were Justified.*** “At the same time in which Christ became a surety for us, and our sins were imputed to him, we were absolved from guilt, and reputed just; that is, actively justified:” Which was from everlasting, or before the foundation of the world.

**5. *God eternally decreed not to punish sin in his people, but in his Son.*** His decree to punish sin in his Son, includes his will to impute it to him; and his purpose not to punish it in his elect, takes in his will not to impute it to them, and must be their Justification from all sin in his sight.

**6. “*Christ’s atonement and bearing sin was in the eye of God from eternity, as if already done:*** Hence the patriarchs were actually and personally justified by it ,” as Dr. Chauncy well observes. Therefore, why may it not be concluded that the elect were justified from everlasting, since God had the atonement of Christ then in his eye? I should be glad to see their arguments thoroughly examined, and solidly refuted, if they do not sufficiently prove what they have brought forth.

Thirdly, I shall now go on to answer those objections which are advanced against eternal Justification.

Here I shall, 1st, attend to those raised by Mr. B. and, 2dly, to various objections made by some other persons.

I am **1st**, to begin with those objections which Mr. B. has advanced against eternal Justification. Now he objects thus:

**Object. 1.** “Faith must be more than a manifestation of our Justification, because the saints are said in scripture to have access, by faith, into the grace wherein they stand;” “being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand (Romans 5:1. 2.):” That is, we stand actually pardoned, and actually justified before God, as well as actually reconciled with God. In the opinion of our author, this text is a sufficient proof that the saints, by faith, enter into a justified state, and consequently cannot be justified before they believe. In order to shew that he mistakes the sense of the text, I would observe these things.

If by faith we are actually brought into, or fixed in a justified state, it will follow that this grace has a causal influence on our Justification; which it is evident it has not, because Justification is no other than the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us, which is an act proper to God. If our actual Justification is by faith, it is either by the habit, or the act of faith: Now, as I apprehend, there is no ground to assert that Justification is by the habit of faith, because no action can be ascribed to faith as a habit; and should any assert that it is by the act of faith, I would enquire of them, whether Justification is only by the first act of faith, and not also by renewed acts? If it is only by the first act of faith, it then evidently follows, that faith has not the same concern or use in our Justification, in its renewed acts, as in the first act of it. Besides, if our actual justification depends upon, or is by repeated acts of faith; this, as a necessary consequence, will arise from thence, That when faith is not in exercise, believers are not justified; because, according to this, faith gives actual being to Justification. Wherefore, I cannot but conclude, that if Justification be the benefit designed by that grace, into which the saints are said to have access by faith, thereby is not intended, that Justification, as to its actual being, commences when they believe, but only that at that time they have the comfortable apprehension of it. But I am persuaded, that upon a due consideration of that strict connection which these words have with the first verse, we shall see reason to conclude, that some other privilege, and not Justification, is intended by that grace, into which the saints are said to have access by faith: For it is to be observed that the Apostle, in the first verse, asserts that we are justified by faith; “being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now, if we suppose that he intends the same thing in the second verse, we shall make him guilty of a gross tautology, and shall then be obliged to take the words in this view; “being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access, by faith, into the grace of Justification;” or thus, “being justified by faith, by faith also we are justified. But I imagine, that none will

allow that the Apostle could possibly be guilty of such a needless repetition; and, if not, it must be granted that some other privilege, and not Justification, is to be understood by that grace, into which the saints are said to have access by faith. Now our access to the throne of grace is usually intended, when the *Greek* word for access is made use of in other places. And I can see no reason why that may not be allowed to be the sense of it in this. The design of the Apostle in the words, seems to me to be this; That through Christ we have freedom of access unto the throne of grace: The preposition *eijv* may as well be rendered *unto*, as *into*: Whereat we stand; for *en* maybe translated *at*, as it sometimes is: As for instance; *eijn dexia~ te tou~gra>nou Qeou~*, “at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).” So that the words strongly imply, that our access to the throne of grace, is a standing privilege or benefit, of which we shall never be deprived, because our liberty of access to God depends upon, or is secured by the infinite merit of Christ’s blood and righteousness, which will eternally remain the same. From the whole, it is evident, that this text affords nothing for the proof of what is collected from it by Mr. B. that the elect of God are not actually justified before they believe, or that their actual Justification is by faith.

**Object. 2.** “Was faith only a manifestation, *i.e.* of our Justification, why is it compared to a hand, as well as to an eye?”

I answer: Faith, as an eye, views that it is necessary we be furnished with a righteousness which is perfect, and that we have no such righteousness of our own. It also beholds the perfection and glory of the righteousness of Christ; and, as a hand, it lays hold on and receives that righteousness for our Justification in the sight of God. But our act of receiving this righteousness, is not the imputation of it to us, which is the *ratio formalis* of our justification, and is God’s act alone; our receiving act can have no concern therein. Besides, we receive Christ’s righteousness as justifying, and consequently are justified before our reception of it. Further, if the act of receiving Christ’s righteousness is our actual Justification, we justify ourselves; whereas Justification is an act of God’s grace towards us in Christ, as has been before observed. Moreover, if actual Justification is by our receiving Christ’s righteousness, it is repeated as often as we act faith on the justifying righteousness of Christ, except this grace, after the first act of it, ceases to have the same concern in Justification as it has in its first act; which, if any take the liberty to assert, I hope they will make it fully appear: To conclude; when it is said that Justification by faith is the comfortable knowledge of it, therein is included the act of renouncing our own righteousness, and applying to Christ’s, as that which alone can justify us before God.

But what proof this affords, that Justification by faith is to be under flood in a proper sense, and cannot precede it, I am at a loss to understand.

**Object. 3.** “Faith, in the business of Justification, must be more than a manifestation; because, was it no other, other graces would share with faith, in its use and office, as it respects our Justification, for they all speak by way of manifestation, and evidence our being loved, and chose in Christ from everlasting.”

In this objection there are several grand mistakes. There is something in it which is perfectly irreconcileable to what our author has before asserted. Here he tells us, that faith, and other graces, are a manifestation of God’s everlasting love, and his choice of us in Christ; which are immanent acts, or I know not what acts of God must be looked upon to be such: Nay, he himself allows they are, in these words; “All the purposes of God, as they are in him, are immanent acts.” Therefore God’s purpose or will to love his people from everlasting, and his eternal election of them in Christ, must needs be such acts. He elsewhere asserts that it is impossible the immanent acts of God should be known by any creature: For, concerning them, he delivers himself in this manner; “As he must be a man, and not an inferior being, who knows what the immanent acts in man are, or how things lie in his mind and will; and he must be an angel, who knows what the immanent acts of an angel are; so he must be God, who knows what the immanent acts of God are, or how things lie in the divine mind and will. Thus God himself speaks of them; “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

It must be allowed, that it is a most palpable contradiction to assert, that the Immanent acts of God cannot be known, and yet that faith, with other graces, is a manifestation of those acts. Again, let us consider what Mr. B. has said about the impossibility of knowing the immanent acts of God. Now, that no creature below man can understand his immanent acts, must readily be granted; because no creature inferior to man, is endued with reason: But that no creature, unless an angel, can know the immanent acts of angels, is a mistake. Their acts are rational acts, and may be understood by a principle of reason, with which the mind of man is furnished; not but the immanent acts of angels must be discovered to man, in order to his knowledge of them; and so likewise the immanent acts of men must be declared, before they can be known by others. The same also is to be observed concerning the immanent acts of God; they, in some measure, are to be understood by rational or intelligent creatures, as

our author himself is obliged to allow in another place, though he is so unhappy as to contradict himself here. It is certain that God's immanent acts could never have been understood by us, if God himself had not revealed them: But have we not, in the Bible, a clear discovery of his immanent acts, which relate to the salvation of his elect; and are they not revealed, in order to be known by them for their peace and comfort? Further: Are not God's purposes to save the elect, and the contrivance of proper ways or methods to effect such a gracious design, his immanent acts? And are not they declared to us in the holy scriptures? And also are they not, in some degree, known by us, as we are illuminated by his grace? Besides, if it is impossible for us to conceive of God's immanent acts, we must remain eternally ignorant of them, for we shall not be deified in heaven.

Add to this, If it is absolutely impossible for us to know the order of things in the divine mind, we shall not, to eternity, be able to resolve this question, Whether God, in his decree of election, foresaw that we would believe, prior to, and independent on his purpose, that we should believe, and be holy? And therefore all disputes with the Remonstrants about it must needs cease, and be acknowledged vain and impertinent. Whence it appears, that this observation favours eternal election no more than eternal Justification. I also add, that how much forever it may be thought, upon a cursory view of this text, ("My ways are not as your ways," etc.) that it affords sufficient evidence to support what it is brought in favour of; I doubt not, but upon a close enquiry into it, the judicious reader will easily see that the true meaning of the words is this: That God's mercy, which is displayed in the remission of our sins (and is spoken of in the verse before) is not to be limited by our narrow conceptions, but that it infinitely exceeds those notions which we are too ready to entertain concerning it. To this purpose are those words of *Calvin* upon the text: "I am not a mortal *man*, that I should act towards you as one severe and implacable." If our author intends that God's immanent acts cannot be comprehended, I believe none will oppose him in that. But there is a wide difference between conception and comprehension; we are capable of conceiving, or forming ideas of God's love, but shall never be able to comprehend it. I observe, that faith is not a manifestation of God's love to us, and choice of us in Christ from everlasting. This grace cannot pry and search into God's heart, and acquaint us with his secrets, any farther than they lie open to our view in divine revelation; our knowledge of them arises wholly from the discovery God himself makes about them. The manifestation of these things, is either external or internal. The external manifestation of God's favour to his elect, and his eternal designs of grace concerning them, is in the Gospel: "That is the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in

God, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9.)” Herein are made known God’s eternal love to his chosen, and the secret actings of his goodness to them before the world was, his covenant-transactions with Christ their Head, to secure their eternal salvation and happiness. For what is the gospel but a manifestation of the contrivance of our redemption, and the actual accomplishment of it by Christ? Upon this account it is called the “wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory (1 Corinthians 2:9.)” There is also an internal manifestation of these things to our souls, of which the Spirit of God is the author: “For he searches all things, yea, even the deep things of God,” and reveals them to us, or enables us spiritually to understand them; as is evident from those words of the Apostle: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit (Ver. 9, 10.)” It is therefore very obvious, that faith is not the manifestation of there things, neither externally, nor internally. It may be farther observed, that other graces, as well as faith, are manifest proofs of our interest in God’s eternal love, and of our being the objects of his eternal choice in Christ; because they are effects which flow from thence. But tho’ they are an evidence of these things, as effects are clear proofs of the existence of the cause by which they are produced, that ought not to be confounded with the manifestation of God’s everlasting love to our souls, and of our eternal election in Christ: For then we must be supposed to have a constant sense of God’s love to us, and choice of us, because our graces, at one time as well as another, are evidences of these things. Besides, the revelation of God’s love to us, is only received by faith. For neither love, nor fear, nor repentance, can embrace the witness of God’s Spirit; that is peculiar to the grace of faith, “which alone Is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1.): “That is, it is by faith only that we view invisible things. Therefore this grace has its peculiar use distinct from all others, in the sense or apprehension of our Justification, and, consequently, this objection vanishes.

**Object. 4.** “If faith, in the business of Justification, is no more than a manifestation, one believer may be more justified than another, as his manifestation thereof may be dearer and fuller.”

I answer, that Justification is God’s act, not ours. He only justifies the ungodly by imputing Christ’s righteousness to them. Therefore Justification by faith is not to be understood properly, *i.e.* the being of Justification is not designed; for that has no dependance on faith, but the knowledge of this benefit is intended, when it is said we are

justified by faith. Nor is it any absurdity to affirm, that one believer has a fuller discovery of his Justification by Christ than another; and that the saints, at one time, may have a stronger assurance of their Justification, than at some others. Farther, Mr. *B.* suggests, under this head, that the doctrine of eternal Justification smells rank of the *Arminians*. Every one knows they are no friends to it, any more than some others. And I am well assured, if those who embrace it, could once discover what connection there is between that doctrine and *Arminian* principles, they would, with the greater freedom, part with it: For, in their opinion, that scheme is wholly contrary to scripture. To conclude: If Justification is by faith, in a proper sense, or if it has a dependance on faith as to its actual being, and faith has always the same use in Justification, I may take leave to return our author's words upon himself: "That a believer in the dark would be no more justified, than whilst he was shut up in unbelief." All which is unscriptural, and smells rank of the *Arminians*, who hold a falling from grace. This absurdity is a natural consequence, which arises from the opinion of actual Justification by faith; because, when that is not in being, upon which any thing depends, that which has its dependance on it cannot then exist; but faith, on which actual Justification depends (according to this author) is not always in the act, though it is in the habit. The consequence is easy to be understood.

**Object. 5.** "To talk of God's actually imputing a thing of that worth, as is Christ's righteousness, to nothing, or to that which as yet has no actual being; that he should actually impute Christ's righteousness to a *non ens*, or to one who as yet is not, is to talk, not only unscripturally, but unintelligibly."

To this objection I answer: The immanent and transient acts of God are to be distinguished; the latter produce a real change in their subjects, and necessarily require their existence; but God's immanent acts are not productive of any physical change in their objects, and consequently it is not necessary that they should exist, when those acts take place. Justification is not a transient, but immanent act: It is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, which is an act in God's mind, and effects no real change in us; therefore our existence is not necessary to our Justification before God. Let it be farther observed, that if the imputation of righteousness requires our actual existence, the imputation of sin doth also. There is the same reason for asserting the one, as the other. That sin was imputed to us before we had an actual being, is evident; for sin was imputed to us when we were made sinners, which we were immediately upon, or by the fall of *Adam*, as we may justly collect from those words of the Apostle: "For by one man's

disobedience many were made sinners (Romans 5:19.):” That is, all the posterity of *Adam* were by God reputed sinners, because they sinned in him as their public head. This clearly proves the imputation of sin to us long before our actual existence. Again: That sin was imputed to the elect (as considered in themselves) from everlasting, is fully demonstrated by the covenant of grace, which God and Christ entered into in eternity, to save them from the dismal consequences of their sins. Sin must be first imputed, before any penal evil can be inflicted on us. The corruption of our nature follows the imputation of sin: That is the cause why we are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin. Therefore we stand charged with this in God’s sight, before our conception in the womb. For, as *Maccovius* well observes: “This sin, *i.e.* original sin, arises from sin imputed, as the desert of it; or, as some love to speak, the demerit. For God, on account of this imputation, most justly punisheth all who are propagated from *Adam* in a natural way.” And elsewhere he answers this question, When, or at what time, is sin imputed, after this manner:

1. “To impute, says he, is a moral, act; that is to say, that this or that thing is accounted as done by one for another, as tho’ the other had done it.” He adds,
2. “That this act may be, where the object, or rather the subject, to which something may be imputed does not exist; and that it may have respect to this future subject; or, that sin may be imputed to any one, who doth not as yet exist, but whose future being is certain. Thus, for instance: Our sins were imputed to Christ the Saviour, as man, and were imputed to him as soon as he was promised as a Mediator, hence it was that believers, who lived before Christ was incarnate, were delivered from eternal death, There things being thus, we now answer to the question, That sin was imputed to all who were to be propagated from Adam, as soon as *Adam* sinned. For as to what *Scharpius supposes*, that sin is imputed when man first exists, or begins to be, that is refuted from hence; that the matter of which man is to be born, is already polluted with inherent sin. Hence the Holy Spirit is said to have sanctified the mass of which Christ was to be born; which is taken from *Luke* 1:35. So then sin inherent is later than sin imputed ” And, in his book of metaphysics, he makes use of this as an argument for Justification preceding regeneration. He asks this question, Whether or not Justification goes before regeneration? And answers: “Thus it is; for as sin inherent supposes that sin is imputed, so also inherent righteousness presupposes righteousness is imputed .” Now as sin may be, and actually is, imputed to us, before we exist; so righteousness may be, and actually is, imputed to us prior to our existence.

**Object. 6.** “All the purposes of God, as they are in him, are immanent acts; his whole counsel is so, as it takes in his works of nature, grace, and glory. Now if this, without the intervention of his power, gives actual being to any thing, to our Justification, for instance, it should, by a parity of reason, give actual being to every thing, to this world, and to all that is therein; to the church militant, and to the church triumphant.” I answer:

All transient acts of God are put forth in time, and they give being to something which did not exist before, and therefore cannot be eternal.

Creation is such an act; it is an act, without God, not in him: Therein his infinite power is exerted, for the production of that which had no existence, till such a creating act takes place, His decree to create, and creation it self, are different acts; the former is an immanent, the latter a transient act; the one is eternal, the other is in time. But Justification is an immanent act, not without, but in God, and is not expressive of any real or physical change in its objects: It therefore must be eternal. Again, it is altogether impertinent and inconclusive to argue thus: If God’s decree gives actual being to any thing, to our Justification, for instance, by a parity of reason, it should give being to every thing, etc. For God’s bare decree gives not actual being to any thing out of himself; but his will, purpose, or decree, as it respects an act in his own mind, is no other than the act it self: As for instance, his will or immutable purpose to love his elect, is his actual love to them, and his will to elect, is election; or it gives actual being to the thing it self, which has no existence but in his infinite mind. So his will or purpose not to impute sin, and to impute righteousness, is his real non-imputation of the one, and actual imputation of the other; and is the complete Justification of the elect, which has no being but in God’s breast, I add, it ought to be proved that Justification is a transient act, by which actual being is given to something out of God himself; or that it is effective of some real and physical change in its objects, as it needs must be, if there is an intervention of God’s power between his decree to justify, and Justification it self. If this is not done, as I am of opinion it can’t be, it will evidently appear that it is far from solid reasoning to infer, that as God’s mere decree to create, gives not actual being to any thing so his will and purpose to justify, doth not give being to Justification.

**Object. 7.** “*Paul* was a chosen vessel before he believed; but where is he said to have been pardoned, or justified, or reconciled, or adopted, whilst lying out from, and persecuting of the Lord Jesus Christ?”

Why should it be enquired whether there things were spoken concerning *Paul*, before he believed? If they are declared of God's elect in general, that is sufficient to support the doctrine of their actual Justification, reconciliation, and adoption before faith. It would no way affect the argument, if we no where read any of these blessings about *Paul* in particular, whilst he was a persecutor of Christ. But, because "*Paul* was justified, reconciled, and adopted, even when in a state of unbelief, therefore he was converted in God's appointed time. If Christ's righteousness had not been imputed to him when he was dead in sin, he would never have received spiritual life from Christ; for regeneration is the effect of Justification, or follows upon it. Agreeably to which this gentleman himself asserts, "That Christ first is made righteousness, and so sanctification; and adds, that "this order ought not to be inverted." Had he always delivered himself consistent with what is here said, he would have prevented this publication. Again: *Paul* was actually reconciled, or God was so to him, when a persecutor; "for peace was made," for *Paul*, as well as other elect persons, "by the blood of Christ's cross (Colossians 1:20.)." If God was not really reconciled to his elect before they believe, and he was full of anger and wrath against them, they never would believe: For wrath in God, is his purpose to inflict the desert of sin on guilty sinners; which cannot consist with designs of love and favour to them. Therefore those who are the objects of God's wrath, in this sense, never will believe. The death of Christ did not render God reconcileable to sinners, as some say, but actually reconciled. And it may be observed, that it is said of *Paul*, that he was reconciled, whilst an enemy; that is, a persecutor of Christ: For he speaks it of himself, in these words; "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Romans 5:10.)." Moreover, he was in a state of adoption, when he persecuted Christ in his members: For, because he was a child of God, "the Spirit of God's Son was sent into his heart;" by whole influences he was enabled "to cry, Abba Father (Galatians 4:6.)." Regeneration doth not make us sons; but, because we are sons, we are regenerated. That the elect "are by nature children of wrath, even as others (Ephesians 2:2.)," is certain; and that they are the children of God by grace, is equally so. And both there may be said of them at one and the same time, but in different respects. As the descendants of *Adam*, they are children of wrath; that is, they are under a sentence of condemnation by the law: As in, and members of Christ, they are the children of God, and free from condemnation in his sight; yea, they are the objects of his special love and delight, and were so from everlasting; which is the reason why they are regenerated in God's due time, when their adoption becomes open

and visible. *Junius* hath this note on Galatians 4:5. *Adoptio filiorum aeterna, sed suo tempore exhibetur*; that is, the adoption of sons is eternal, but is manifested in time.

**Object. 8.** “A sinner’s Justification may, and should be considered as the birth of time and so personal and actual, in the joyful and blessed application thereof.” I answer:

Justification, as it is an act in God, or as it is taken for his non-imputation of sin, and imputation of righteousness, ought not to be considered as the birth of time, but is eternal, because all his immanent acts are so. Again: Is actual Justification the same with personal, and cannot persons be justified before they exist? then they cannot be personally elected, before their actual existence. If there is a personal election from eternity, there also may be a personal Justification from eternity, because the latter requires our existence no more than the former.

Those who object against eternal Justification, That the existence of the persons justified is necessary to Justification, would do well to consider, that the Remonstrants, in the same manner, object against eternal election. Fore say they, “It cannot be, that any one should be actually elected, who doth not as yet actually exist, for as much as no qualities belong to a *non ens*. ” Let our opponents see how they can remove this difficulty, which is railed against eternal election; and closely examine if that answer, which removes it, as levelled against a personal election from everlasting, doth not also fully take off its force against the personal Justification of the elect before time. I am persuaded they will: For as election is an act in God, and is not effective of any real change in us; so is Justification, and works no physical change in us, as has been before observed. If by actual Justification, or the application of that benefit, is intended the discovery of it to God’s elect, for their consolation and joy, it certainly follows faith; and is that Justification by faith which the scripture speaks of, when faith is taken in a proper sense, but is no evidence that Justification it self is not eternal.

**Object. 9.** “The distinction of virtual and actual, has its use and place in scripture, as well as in nature. In nature the care is plain; for the earth virtually contains all the fruit that will be brought forth and ripened, not only the next summer, but an hundred years hence; whence it follows not that trees are now full of ripe fruit. The sea also virtually contains all fountains and rivers that can possibly flow from it, as eternity contains all possible time. And no less plain is the case as to scripture, where Christ is said to be a lamb slain from the foundation of the world: Which cannot be understood of Christ’s

being actually crucified, before he was born; but the slaying there must be virtual, not actual."

This distinction of virtual and actual I cannot well understand, especially as it is used in the affair of Justification. Virtual seems to me to signify something which has *eße in potentia*, being in power, or that which is possible to be effected; and may be considered as uncertain, with respect to actual being. Thus all possible things may be said to be virtually in the divine mind, or to lie before God as things which may be produced by his infinite power, though never brought into real being: "For *ens* is divided into *ens* in power and act." Wherefore I conceive it may be as well to make use of the word potential as virtual, when the actual being of any thing, which, may be, is not designed, but only its being in power. I will not pretend to say what farther may be designed, by virtual (than potential imports) when it is made use of in the business of Justification, But I am not able to understand that the term it self signifies any thing more. Again: It appears very strange to me that any thing, which has no being but in God himself, (as Justification has not) should be said to have only a virtual being till time, and that its actual being commences in time; because, whatever is in God, must needs be eternal. Therefore it is an improper way of reasoning to infer, that because trees are not now full of ripe fruit, that God doth not actually, but only virtually justify his people. before faith. Justification, as It is an act in God's mind, ought not to be considered as future, but as it always has been in himself, though not known to us till we believe, I add, that virtual, as standing opposed to actual, seems to be made use of by some in such a way, as, in a great measure, destroys the true notion of a public head and representative. Whatever is done by a public head, as so considered, is reckoned as done by those whom he represents, or, what he acts, as such, is looked upon as acted by them. This was the care with all mankind, who sinned in *Adam*, their public head; they were accounted really guilty of his transgression, the not in actual being, which is the cause why they are conceived in sin. And the elect were as really justified in Christ their public head, when he was justified from all their sins: As he, in God's account, was discharged from all guilt, so were they also: For he was not acquitted without respect had to them, as the persons whom he represented. To talk of being virtually justified, in opposition to a real or actual discharge from sin in God's account, is directly contrary to all just notions of Christ being the representative of his people. To conclude: How Christ could be virtually slain, in the common acceptation of the word, which is taken to signify the being, action, or suffering of a person in *another*, I can by no means understand: I know of none who could represent Christ, and in whom he might be said to do or suffer any

thing. It must therefore be understood as that which certainly should be, according to the divine decree; and that his sufferings and satisfaction was then in the eye of God, as if he had already suffered, and atoned for our sins, as was before observed. But because Christ did not actually suffer from everlasting, it follows not that the elect were not justified from everlasting; because the same is not to be concluded of God's immanent, as is of his transient acts. Justification is an immanent act, and is eternal; the punishing of Christ was a transient act, and could not be eternal.

I shall now observe some things concerning the use of the word *actual* in Justification, as it is said to be so upon believing, and not before. And if it is intended, when it is said that the elect were not actually justified from everlasting, that God did not acquit them of their sins in his mind, it is a mistake, as appears by what has been already observed; or if it is designed that they are not declaratively discharged from them before they believe, it is not true, for that they are by the gospel in general, though that declaration cannot be received till faith is wrought in their souls. But if the meaning is, that they have no evidence of the remission of their sins, and the Justification of their persons, till they believe, that is readily granted: But it is denied that this is Justification it self, for it is only the manifestation of Justification. This seems to be all which is intended by some, who say that the elect are actually justified when they believe. Dr.

*Twisse* takes actual Justification in no other sense; for, says he, "What is it that. the remission of sins, and our acceptance, signify, if not inward and immanent acts In God; acts of which kind do not arise in God anew ?" A little after he speaks of actual Justification, and expresses himself thus: "God erects his tribunal in our hearts; our own conscience, according to the law of God, accuses, terrifies, and wounds us: At length the mercy of God thus shewing it self, the Spirit of God, by the voice of the gospel, raises, comforts, and refreshes us, and pronounces that our sins are forgiven us, for Christ's sake." This is what he intends, when he afterwards says actual Justification is not, unless to such as believe; which, in his sense, is certainly true, for only believers have a sentence of Justification pronounced in their consciences by, the Spirit of God.

**Object. 10.** "Actual possession, be it of a crown, takes place, according to the constitution of the kingdom, and the methods of government, which in all wise administrations are settled, and not left uncertain and precarious: Now is the order of civil governments great, and God's government of the world of nature yet greater; and is there no such thing as order in the gospel?"

I answer, that without doubt there is a beautiful order in the gospel; and that this gentleman has offered nothing, which in the least degree proves that eternal Justification breaks in upon that order. I hope it will not be said that God's immanent acts do follow upon, or in order succeed, his transient acts, but on the contrary; as for instance, creation follows God's decree to create: Justification is an immanent act, and doth not follow any transient act; nor is there any transient act of God that is our Justification, or which is the execution of his decree to justify us, as creation is the execution of his purpose to create. Again, I can't apprehend what the actual possession of Justification is, unless it be the sense and knowledge of it, which certainly follows faith, for none of the elect can know they are justified till they believe; the consequence of which may easily be gathered from what has been said before.

**Object 11.** "How expressly are we told in scripture, that in point of actual existence, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual?" And, if so, the elect not only actually exist, but are actually condemned by the law of God, before they are actually justified."

The answer is, that the inference drawn from the words is not just; for they intend that we first receive a depraved nature from the first *Adam*, and afterwards holiness, or spiritual life, from Christ the second *Adam*. Besides, the existence of the elect is no more necessary to their actual and personal Justification, than it is to their actual and personal election. *Rutherford* speaking of election, hath these words: "But this, *i.e.* election, is an immanent and eternal act; for no act of God's will is in time, or transient; what God wills, he willed from eternity ." He observes the very same concerning Justification, in these words: "These acts of imputing, and not imputing, are immanent acts in God, and therefore eternal ." Farther, we grant that the elect are sententially condemned by the law of God, but this is not inconsistent with their Justification in Christ, and freedom from condemnation in him: For, as the author just now quoted observes, "The elect always, yea, before they believe, are free from condemnation, for, and on the account of, the death of Christ ." To conclude: That which is called their actual Justification, is no more than the discovery of it, as was before observed.

**Object. 12.** "Though now we are glorified in Christ, we who believe, hope one day to be glorified together with Christ."

The design of our author, in there word, is to suggest, that as our glorification in Christ from everlasting is not actual, so the Justification of the elect in him from everlasting is not actual. In answer to which it may be said, that glorification is a work of God

upon us, and is expressive, of a real change in us, and therefore requires our actual existence; but Justification is not such an act, therefore our actual existence is not necessary to it.

**Object. 13.** “Christ’s righteousness is not upon us, in the sense of the gospel, before faith; for the gospel is express, that it is to, or upon us, in a way of believing; and should men or angels tell us the contrary, let us not regard them.”

In order to remove this objection, I would observe, that this author himself allows, that the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is our Justification, and that this is God’s act; which he strongly expresses in these words: “None, save God the judge of all, could make Christ to be sin for us; and none, save God the judge of all, can make any of us the righteousness of God in him.” I apprehend him to mean, that as Christ was made sin, by God’s imputing our sins to him, so we are made righteous, by God’s imputing Christ’s righteousness to us: Which, if he does, he is not consistent with himself; for then it follows, that Christ’s righteousness is to, or upon us, in a way of imputation, and not in a way of believing. Therefore, should it be granted that only believers are the objects of Justification (which cannot be, because God justifies the ungodly) yet it would not follow that Christ’s righteousness is upon them in a way of believing, or that it is by their faith imputed to them; for if so, they make themselves the righteousness of God in him; which our author justly denies, and grants, that Justification is God’s act, and not theirs. Farther, I admire that a person of Mr. *B*’s humility should express himself with so assuming an air as he does, in laying, should men or angels tell us the contrary, let us not regard them. Had an anathema been pronounced against such as assert Justification before faith, this sentence would have had the same force and degree of resentment in it, as that of the Apostle against the perverters of the gospel:” if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:9.).” However, it must be allowed, that his delivering himself in as positive a manner as if he had the infallible guidance of an inspired writer, is going far enough in all reason, without pronouncing any dreadful anathemas against those who differ from him. What is the reason why those must not be regarded, who affirm that the elect of God are justified before faith? Is not Mr. *B*. as likely to be mistaken as they are? I am indeed tempted to think that he has not much regarded what has been offered for Justification before faith, for if he had, certainly his resentments could never have carried him these lengths.

**Object. 14.** “Gifts, how freely soever they may be designed for us, and given to us, they are not ours, before we receive them: There

must be the receiving, as well as the giving hand, before the poor are actually possessed of the rich man's gift."

I answer to this, it is a mistake, that gifts are not ours before received; for the donor's act of giving makes them ours, and not our receiving act; and we receive them as what we have a proper right because given us by him whose they are, to bestow. Therefore it is not the poor man's receiving a gift that makes it become his, but the act of the giver. Besides, legal possession depends upon a prior right to the thing possessed, for otherwise our possession of it cannot be just and lawful; because legal right is founded either upon purchase or free gift, and not on our receiving any thing we enjoy. Again: This makes our right to, and interest in pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace, and glory it self, to depend as much upon our act of receiving these benefits, as on God's act of giving them to us; which is absurd. Moreover, it follows hence that heaven is not the saints, or that they have no right to it whilst here upon earth; which is apparently false, for they are now heirs of the kingdom. To conclude: That which is given by any person's friend into the hand of another for him (he not being present) is as much his, as if he had actually received it at the hand of the donor. Thus all grace and glory was given to the elect in Christ before the world, began; and both as much became theirs, by virtue of God's gift, as if they had been present, and actually received the one and the other at God's hand. I hope it will be allowed that the doctrine of eternal Justification stands unshaken, notwithstanding this author's attack; for all his objections have not weight enough to bear it down. If many of the similes he makes use of, in treating about the doctrine of Justification, should die buried in some dark cavern of the earth, where he makes a supposition of putting the sun, I imagine the danger will not be much to the churches.

**2dly**, I shall now consider some objections which are raised by others against this doctrine. And it is objected:

**Object. 1.** "To this purpose, that as sanctification, and all the fruits of the Spirit, perseverance in grace, and eternal glory, were granted to the elect in Christ from everlasting, no less than Justification; so they were not then justified, in any other or farther sense, than they were sanctified, etc. which they could not actually be."

I answer, that sanctification, and glorification, are transient acts of God, and do produce a real change in us. To these acts our personal existence is necessary; we must first be, before we can be made holy by God's grace: Therefore the gift of sanctifying grace, in the eternal covenant, could be no other than a representative sanctification in Christ, not actual. Justification is an act of God's free grace towards

us in Christ, and is not productive of any real or inherent change in us; whence it follows, that our personal existence is not necessary to it. Now as Justification is not the implantation of grace in us, but is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, which is an act in God himself, the grant of Justification was not a lodging of grace in Christ's hand for us, to be communicated to us, by which we might become justified, as the gift of sanctification was: Nor could it be a promise to Christ, that God at any certain time would begin to justify us, because justification is an immanent act, and consequently must be eternal.

As the nature of this grace greatly differs from sanctification, it ought not, in the promise of it, to be considered in the same light.

**Object. 2.** “If *Adam’s* sin, and our own personal sins, were imputed to us in time, we were not personally justified from eternity, but do need a true and real Justification in time. But the former is true, therefore the latter. The reason of the consequence is this; where the guilt and charge of sin is, and law-condemnation for it, there Justification is not.”

I answer, that *Adam’s* sin was imputed to the elect, as well as to the non-elect, before they had a being; and that the elect are under a charge of sin by the law, and a sentence of condemnation for it, as soon as they exist. But all this is not inconsistent with their secret Justification before God, as he considered them in the righteousness of Christ; that being as really imputed to them for their Justification before him, as their sins were to their guiltiness in his sight. Therefore they need no farther justifying act in time, than passed towards them from everlasting.

**Object. 3.** “God’s eternal will to justify or pardon, or non-impute sin, is not Justification.” For the support of which two reasons are offered; as, First, that act or benefit, which is not the fruit of Christ’s death and bloodshed, is not Justification; but God’s will nor to impute sin, is not the fruit of Christ’s death and bloodshed, and therefore it is not Justification.

I answer, God’s will to save, and make his elect happy, is not the fruit, but the cause of Christ’s death. But though God’s will not to impute sin, and his will not to pardon it without a satisfaction from Christ, to secure the honour of his law, and the glory of his justice, may be distinguished, yet they ought not to be separated; for his will not to impute sin to his elect, intrudes his will to impute it to Christ, and to punish it in him, without any abatement. Therefore it cannot be said that God ever absolutely willed not to charge sin on his people, or without respect to their redemption from it by Christ. Again: God had in his eye, even from everlasting, the atonement

made by Christ; and, on the account of Christ's engagement to suffer for the sins of the elect, he acquitted them as really as though Christ had actually suffered the penalty demerited by their transgressions.

The second thing, which is offered, is this: "That act of God, which is no discharge or freedom from the law, or the charge thereof, whereto God proceeds not by an external rule, as a law-giver, is not Justification; but God's will not to Impute sin to his elect, is no discharge from the law, therefore it is not Justification."

In answer to this, let it be observed, that the charge of sin upon men by the law, is no other than a manifestation that they were under the secret imputation of sin in God's mind, before the open charge of it: And so also the declaration which is in the gospel of believers freedom from a law-charge of sin, is no other than a discovery of their discharge from all sin in God's eternal mind. God does not then begin to look upon, or consider them as clear from guilt, when the gospel declares they are so in his account. Besides, as on the score of God's imputing sin to us, we are accounted, guilty in his view, and not by the declaration of that act; so, on the score of his non-imputation of sin, and imputation of righteousness, we are accounted justified in his sight, and not by the discovery of those acts. If it is not thus, men before their personal existence are neither accounted guilty, nor righteous, in God's view. Let it farther be observed, that the discharge of the elect from sin, in God's mind, was acted by him as a lawgiver, or with a view to that satisfaction which the law was to receive from Christ their surety. Herein therefore, he proceeded according to the external rule, which he has published, that is to say his law, and not in the least contrary to it.

**Object. 4.** "The covenant of redemption or grace, as with Christ, is not that whereby sin was charged, or said upon Christ by the Father, and therefore is not our discharge."

To this it may be answered, that a surety's engagement to pay a debt makes it become his in the eye of the law, and in the account of the creditor, and therefore he expects payment at his hand. Thus, when God was reconciling the world to himself, or forming the glorious plan and model of our reconciliation by Christ, which was in eternity, he did not then impute sin to his people; for the Apostle says expressly, "not imputing their trespasses to them (2 Corinthians 5:19.):" Therefore he imputed sin to Christ their surety; or else it was then imputed to none, neither to the principal debtor, nor the surety, which I imagine none will assert. The imputation of sin is an act in God's mind, and so it might be, and actually was, imputed to Christ upon his undertaking for the elect; for if God did not look upon our sins as Christ's, by virtue of his suretyship engagements,

and we were not discharged from sin in God's light upon that account, how could the Old Testament saints have been acquitted of their sins? For if we cannot be discharged, unless our sins be imputed to Christ, and they could not be placed to his account, till he "was made of a woman, and made under the law (Galatians 4:4, 5.)," as is suggested; then not one soul was justified before Christ's incarnation; than which, there is nothing more false. As Christ stood secretly charged with sin from everlasting, as the elects surety, so the open charge of it upon him was in time, when he was incarnate, and made under the law: But what is collected from thence, in these words, is no just inference; "The charge of sin on Christ was by the law: And I think none should venture to say, that Christ was made under the law from eternity: I am sure the scripture speaks otherwise, Galatians 4:5. Isaiah 53:6. So that neither was he charged, or under any imputation of sin; neither were we discharged from eternity." I answer, it doth not follow, that because Christ was not openly charged with sin by the law from eternity, which indeed he could not be, that he was under no imputation of sin, unless it be denied that there is any such thing as a secret, but real imputation of sin to Christ, or sinners, in God's breast, which I am sure ought not to be denied; for imputation is properly an act in God, and must be eternal, as was before observed. Besides, Christ's suretyship engagements were the proper foundation of the imputation of our sins to him, as they are of the imputation of his righteousness to us. Therefore the charge of sin on Christ bears date from his covenant-transactions with the Father, and must needs be eternal.

**Object. 5.** "Suretyship of this sort bringing the charge on Christ from eternity, would prevent our being under the law, and the charge of sin on us thereby, and consequently our redemption therefrom."

This is an objection which has, of late, been made use of against the doctrine of eternal Justification: But that it is a great mistake, or that this consequence drawn from eternal Justification is not just, will appear from hence. It is many hundred years, since all the sins of the elect were openly charged on Christ by the law, and he atoned for them, and also was actually acquitted of them by God: Now as all this doth not prevent those of the elect, who have lived since his incarnation, coming under the law, and a charge of sin by it, and also a sentence of condemnation for their sins, the secret charge of sin on Christ from eternity, certainly cannot be attended with any of these consequences. But farther: Redemption is necessary, even where there is no charge of sin by the law, if sin has been committed by such who now stand clear of all guilt. This is evident in the case of Old Testament saints, who were actually glorified when Christ suffered, and consequently were under no imputation of sin; yet

their redemption was no less needful than the redemption of other elect person; and it was actually effected by Christ, when they were in glory, as is manifest from those words of the Apostle; “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Romans 3:25.).” It may therefore be strongly concluded, that Justification from eternity doth not set aside redemption in time, since the actual glorification of Old Testament saints, did not make their redemption by Christ unnecessary. Besides, our redemption from the law was what Christ undertook in the covenant of grace; and our discharge from sin in God’s mind, did not make it unnecessary for him to fulfil his own engagements, but rather laid him under obligation to perform what he had promised.. Upon the whole, it is plain, that this objection has no weight or force in it.

**Object. 6.** “That is Justification to which the definition of it belongs; but the definition of it belongs to some declared act, or sentence of God.”

I answer: If the imputation of sin to us, and a sentence of condemnation conceived in God’s mind, is our guiltiness and condemnation in his account, which I hope will be granted; then it ought to be allowed, that the non-imputation of sin, and imputation of righteousness to us, or a sentence of absolution conceived in God’s breast, is our real Justification in his sight. Again: As on the score of God’s Imputing sin we are accounted sinners, so on the score of his imputing righteousness we are accounted righteous; not by the declaration of that act. Under this head of objection it is said, “That the inward thoughts of a judge concerning a criminal, are neither his condemnation nor Justification, but his passing sentence according to law is so.” As an answer to this I would observe, that a sentence of condemnation, conceived in the mind of a judge, is the secret condemnation of a criminal: For when a sentence of condemnation is passed by a judge upon a malefactor, he doth not then begin to look upon him as guilty; but because he concluded him guilty, he formed a sentence of condemnation against him in his mind, and therefore pronounces it according to law. Now, as Dr. Ames observes, “A sentence of Justification was, as it were, conceived in the mind of God by the decree of justifying:” “Which sentence of Justification in God’s mind, was as real a Justification of the elect before God, as a sentence of condemnation, conceived in the mind of a judge, is the secret, though not open condemnation of a malefactor. As Christ was really made sin by God’s act of imputing our sins to him, and not by the declaration thereof in the gospel; so we were really made righteous, or justified by God’s imputation of

his righteousness to us, and not by the discovery of that act in the gospel. *Mr. Eyere* thus answers an objection, that is much like what is here advanced: "Though the forgiveness of magistrates be by some published act of oblivion, yet it doth not follow, that God must proceed in the same manner; because the promulgation of an act of grace, is for the direction and limitation of judges and ministers of state, that they do not execute the sentence of the law. Now in the Justification of a sinner, God hath no need of such an act, because he is the sole judge and justifier himself; and therefore the purpose of his will secures the person sufficiently, though his security be not declared, and makes the law of condemnation (which depends wholly on the will of God) to be of no force, in regard of the real execution of it, whether he plead it or no; as in infants, and doubting "Christians, whose hearts do condemn them." He adds: "A judge, that hath the legislative power in his own breast needs no published edict to absolve an offender. Now God is such a judge, as doth not receive, but gives laws unto all. The publishing of acts of grace is for the comfort of the offender, rather than for any need that the supreme magistrate hath thereof, as to the compleating of his act; as, for instance, the act of oblivion was a real pardon when it passed the house; for though delinquents had no knowledge of their immunity, from the penalties which they had incurred before it was published in print, yet the vote or sanction of the house did secure them from danger, and invalidate the statutes that were in force against them; otherwise delinquents would be more beholden to the printer that published the act, than to the parliament that made it. So the publication of the new covenant was for the comfort of God's elect, and not for their security, *in favo Dei.*" Wherefore, I cannot but conclude, that it is a mistake, that Justification before God is the declaration of our being righteous in his sight, and consequently that there is no force in this objection.

**Object. 7.** "If there is some justifying act of God passing upon a man when he believes, then that is the true and very time of his Justification; but the former is true, and therefore the latter." Several things are offered for the proof of this: As,

(1.) "Our being in covenant is the rule and measure of our Justification. So far as men are under the covenant of grace, so far they are justified: Now God makes covenant with souls at believing, in their own persons."

I answer, that it is a mistake that God actually makes covenant with his elect when they believe, or that at that time they are in the covenant of grace in a farther sense than they were before; for the covenant is only revealed to them at the time of their new birth, and is not then made with them, as will appear from these following

things. Those who are not in the covenant of grace, cannot partake of any blessings in that covenant; for their right to the benefits of it, depends upon their interest therein. Again: If God actually makes covenant with his elect, it is either before or after they are regenerated. It cannot be before, for they are full of enmity against God, and are not subject to his law, neither can they be, as the Apostle declares: Therefore at that time they are altogether incapable of entering into covenant with God. Dr. *Ames*, in shewing the difference between the old and new covenant, observes that they differ in the efficient cause. His words are these: "For in that, *i.e.* the old covenant, there were two parties, namely, it was the compact of God and man but in this, *i.e.* the new, God alone contracts; for man is now dead in sins, and hath no power of entering into a spiritual covenant with God ." Dr. *Chauncy* asserts, that the elect are interested in the covenant of grace before they believe, in these words: "All the elect have a real right and interest in the covenant, even before believing; such a right as entitles them to believing: For Christ hath undertaken, that all that the Father hath given him, shall come to him; and it's therefore absolutely necessary they should, as promised in the covenant; not as a condition, as a leading benefit, and no otherwise ." Elsewhere he expresses himself thus: "It's mightily to derogate from the covenant of grace, to make the promise thereof to depend on a stipulation on our parts: For, if we stipulate with God, we also promise to him, as well as he to us, before performance, and likewise that we do our part before he doth his; for the stipulating is covenanting; and for any man to talk of any such thing, runs upon multitudes of rocks. Our radical stipulation was in Christ; all other stipulations are effects of it ." He adds, "The covenant of grace is the. act of God; in the person of the Father with us, in the person of Christ in him, we did restipulate. He was the great covenanter on our part, and the condition of this covenant; and when we by virtue of the promise take hold of this covenant, we stand upon this condition with God, and God dispensemeth all benefits upon this condition to us: And it is a free and absolute covenant to us, a covenant of promise; because not only the promise is bestowed, without foederal conditions performed by our selves, and the great foederal condition, the Lord Christ, is freely bestowed on us."

To these things I subjoin, that all me posterity of *Adam* were actually in, or under, the covenant of works, when that covenant was made with him, because he then represented them as their public head, wherefore their personal consent was required to that covenant. If this is not granted, it must be denied that we were guilty of *Adam's* sin; and also, that the corruption of our nature is the consequence of his transgression. Now, if all *Adam's* off-spring were actually under

the covenant of works, immediately upon his consenting to it, and from thence his sin became as really theirs, as though they had been actually present when he committed it, and upon that account they receive inherent this from him; why may it not be allowed, that the elect were actually interested in the covenant of grace, when Christ, as their public head, entered into that compact with the Father? And also, that his righteousness was really imputed to them for their Justification, by virtue of their interest in the covenant of grace, tho' they did not then exist, as *Adam's* sin was imputed to all his seed, before their personal existence by virtue of their interest in the covenant of works? Not after, or upon believing, doth God make covenant with them, for then they must be supposed to partake of one eminent blessing of the covenant of grace, before they are interested in it; for faith, yea, all regenerating grace, is contained in, and promised by that covenant; as is evident from those words, "A new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you as heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:24.)." Therefore because they are interested in the covenant of grace, even when unregenerate, they are born again, in God's appointed time. Now who can imagine, that if the elect are interested in the covenant of grace before they believe, and that it is from thence they do believe, or receive faith, that that covenant is made with them after, or upon, believing? That would be no less absurd, than to suppose an effect gives being to its cause. Therefore when we read of God's making covenant with his people, it only intends the manifestation of covenant promises and blessings to their souls; which is evident from those words, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew unto them his covenant (Psalm 25:14.)." This author observes,

(2.) "Our Justification follows our union with Christ: Now as there is a legal and representative union of the elect in Christ, which infers their being justified in him; so there is a vital and influential union brought about at believing."

As an answer, let there things be observed. Our vital union with Christ is not the effect, but the cause of our faith; as the union of the felon with the flock, is the cause of its bearing fruit. Again; Vital union with Christ is not the foundation of our Justification, but that legal union which is between Christ and us; that is, as he is our surety, and we are the principal debtors: For it was by virtue hereof that our sins were imputed to him; and from hence it is that his righteousness becomes ours, or is imputed to us. This union is eternal; and so is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, which arises from that union. That which was not necessary to the imputation of our sins to Christ, is not necessary to the imputation of

his righteousness; vital union to Christ was not required to the former, therefore it is not to the latter. He farther adds,

(3.) "Justification goes with our possession of Christ; that is, all blessings of the covenant go with him."

I answer, that the elect are interested in Christ before they believe, though till then they are ignorant of their interest in him. They are his by choice and acceptation, and also by redemption and purchase; and he is theirs by a gracious donation of himself to them, in the everlasting covenant. Farther, Justification depends not upon our possession of Christ, or an application of his grace and righteousness to our souls, by the Spirit of God, though our knowledge of it does, for that is an act in God towards, and not the infusion of grace in us, and is therefore eternal; for no new do, or can, arise in God; he has the same view of us in Christ before we believe, as after believing. He subjoins,

(4.) "That believers have a farther discharge in the law and are not so under the sentence of condemnation thereto, as unbelievers, tho' elect"

I answer: The elect are under a lenience of condemnation by the law, as was before granted; yet, this notwithstanding, they are justified in their head Christ, as was before observed. The elect who are not called, are justified in God's sight; the called elect are justified, not only secretly, but openly: A declared freedom from condemnations Is no more than Justification revealed. He adds,

(5.) "Believers are under the justifying discharge of the gospel."

It is true they are so; but this is no more than the manifestation of Justification, and not the thing itself. Under this objection it is farther said, "That when souls are brought under this, *i.e.* the covenant of grace (which mode of expression I cannot but disapprove, as improper, because they are in the covenant before they believe) then the filthy garments are taken away, and they are clothed, with change of raiment. Which, if true, it follows, that their sins are imputed to them, at least till after the first act of faith is put forth: And also, that Christ's righteousness is not imputed till after the exercise of faith; which makes Justification to follow both the habit and act of faith; and is directly contrary to the express words of the Apostle: "but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly (Romans 4:4.);" for no regenerate person is an ungodly person.

These objections are to be met with in Mr. Beart's Vindication of the eternal Law and Gospel, second Part. I hope the answers here given to them, will take off all that force which they may seem to carry with them, against the doctrine of eternal Justification.

**3rdly**, There are some other popular objections, which have lately been advanced against this important truth, which I shall endeavour to answer.

**Object. 1.** “There cannot be a Justification from sin, till there is a charge of sin; but the one is in time, therefore the other.”

I answer, this objection is as much levelled against the imputation of sin before time, as against eternal Justification. That God from everlasting did impute sin to his elect, as in themselves considered, is evident by the covenant which God and Christ entered into. Again: The charge of sin upon them by the law, is no more than a discovery of their standing secretly charged with sin in God’s sight long before, as has been already observed; neither is their open acquittance by the gospel, any more than a manifestation of their secret Justification in God’s mind, as he beheld them in Christ from eternity. It is granted that their open discharge from sin follows the declarative charge of it by the law, and that the one and the other is in time; but this militates not with eternal Justification in Christ.

**Object. 2.** “If the elect are justified without faith, they may be saved without faith.”

I answer: It is very bad logic to argue from a part to the whole; that which is true of the whole, is of a part, but not on the contrary; that which is true of a part, may not be so of the whole. Again: It may justly be said, that in some sense the elect are saved before they believe, and consequently without faith, as appears by these words: “who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ before the world began (2 Timothy 1:9.)”. Salvation in a sense precedes vocation; for the elect are saved with many temporal salvations, before, and in order to, calling; or they are preserved by God’s kind providence from many dangers, and recovered out of many afflictions) in order to be called; which I take to be included in those words: “preserved in Jesus Christ, and called (Jude 1:1.)”. Besides, they are saved in a spiritual sense, before calling; for Christ hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, the wrath of God; and also has conquered all their enemies, sin, Satan, death, and hell. This was the work which the Father gave him to do, and he came into the world to accomplish; for, “he came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10.) The distinction of the impetration and application of salvation, which is commonly made by divines, perfectly agrees with this; the impetration of salvation is before, the application of it begins, when we believe.

If glorification, or the consummation of salvation, is intended in this objection, as I suppose it is; it follows not, that because we are

justified without faith, that we may also be taken to heaven without faith: For it is not only necessary that we have a title to glory, which is the justifying righteousness of Christ; but that also grace be implanted in us, in order to fit us for the actual possession of everlasting life.

**Object. 3.** “Some have said they will never believe the doctrine of eternal Justification, unless it can be made appear that we were sinners from everlasting.”

If there is any thing of weight in this trifling objection, it must be this, That we cannot be justified from sin before we have committed it: I answer, were not the elect of God considered as sinners in the act of election? I am sure the Sublapsarian doctrine necessarily supposes it; and I am inclined to believe that the authors of this objection do not much favour the Supralapsarian notion. Now how the elect of God could be considered as sinners, in God’s eternal counsels, and yet no sin be imputed to them, I freely confess that I am not able to conceive: But if sin was imputed from everlasting to the elect, as in themselves considered; why may it not be allowed that they might be discharged from all sin, as God viewed them in Christ in eternity? Again, the actual commission of sin was not necessary to the imputation of it to Christ; this is so manifest, it needs no proof. Now let the authors of this objection make it appear, that though our sins might be, and actually were, imputed to Christ before we had committed them; yet that we cannot be justified from our sins, before the actual commission of them, I am tempted to think that this is a task they will not undertake, because they can’t hope to succeed in it. Farther, this objection lies as strong against the complete Justification of believers; for if we cannot be discharged from sin before it is actually committed, we are not perfectly justified upon believing: But Justification is progressive, as sanctification is, which does not suit well with Protestant doctrine.

**Object. 4.** “Some have farther said, that this doctrine is only speculative, and of no great moment; and that they think it safest to go in the common beaten path of justification by faith.”

I answer, the same may be objected against other great truths of the gospel. It may as justly be said, what need we trouble ourselves about such speculations as the doctrines of election, the eternal covenant of grace; the imputation of our sins to Christ, and his righteousness to us; and of God’s eternal love, as the spring and source of these blessings? What reason can be offered, why the doctrine of eternal Justification should be called speculative, any more than these important truths? Again: For any to flirt against a doctrine as speculative, without taking notice of those arguments

which are made use of to support it, is, in my opinion, a tacit acknowledgment that they are not able to answer them; or at least that they are unwilling to be at any pains that way, and therefore think to bear down their weight with a magisterial air. This, indeed, is taking the shortest method to end a controversy; but is no instance of a generous temper, or a mind open to conviction. Let such objectors shew us why it is safest to go in the common beaten path of Justification by faith; with submission it may be told them, that some divines, of no less penetration than themselves, could see no danger in holding the doctrine of Justification before faith. Dr. *Owen* speaks very honourably of some that did, though he differed from them, in these words: "I am imposed on to lay the foundation of all *Antinomianism* (as Mr. *Burgess* is also) to maintain *Justification* from eternity, or at least in the cross of Christ, of all that *should believe*, and *Justification by faith* to be but the *sense of it* in our *consciences* (which *last* I know *better* and *wiser men* than my self that do, though I do not.)" It is very well known that those, who hold the doctrine of eternal Justification, are reproachfully called *Antinomians*, by some who differ from them in that point; and it may be equally observed, that many of their opponents are very fond of being thought men of catholic and charitable tempers; to maintain a due respect to such as are not altogether in the same way of thinking with themselves, (which is what they ought to do) but their loading those who are for eternal Justification, with the heavy charge of *Antinomianism* on that account, is no instance of their justice or charity: For, if I am not greatly mistaken, those who believe that doctrine, are far more clear of what is objected against them, than many of these charitable persons who are forward to asperse, and labour to bring thereunder contempt. It may be presumed, that some of these persons are of opinion that such as be moderate *Calvinists*, or are somewhat inclined to *Arminianism*, and *Pelagianism*, are not to be treated as enemies, but friends; whilst those that embrace the doctrine of eternal Justification, are to be esteemed dangerous adversaries to truth, although they prefers to agree with them in almost all other respects. How well it becomes any men, prosessing *Calvinism*, to discover an unkind and rancorous disposition towards such as believe, and endeavour to defend this doctrine, let the unprejudiced and impartial reader determine. My design in this, is not to court the favour and respect of such persons, but to observe to them how agreeably they conform their conduct to that moderation and charity, which they sometimes earnestly recommend.

**Object. 5.** "It is objected by some, that many who have embraced this doctrine, have been a reproach to religion by their disagreeable conduct, and therefore they cannot judge favourably of the doctrine it self."

In answer to this I observe, that we ought not to determine in favour of, or against, any opinion by the conversations of these who believe it; for a regular life is no proof of a person's principles being just, nor is an irregular deportment always an evidence of mistakes in the judgment. Besides, many who never believed this doctrine, have brought an odium upon the gospel by a sinful course and practice; now are we to object against, and recede from, the truths of Christ on that account? surely we ought not. Moreover, corrupt nature abuses the law of God, as well as the gospel of Christ, as appears from those words of the Apostle: "But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; for without the law, sin was dead (Romans 7, 8)." The strict prohibition of sin by the law, irritates our depraved minds; and lust works in us with the greater force and violence. "We strive for that which is forbid, and always desire those things which are denied us," as *Pareus* observes. Therefore should this objection take place, we must regard neither law nor gospel. Farther, I hope it may be justly allowed, that the far greater number of those who believe this doctrine, do adorn their profession by a conversation becoming the gospel. Upon the whole, It appears that neither candor, nor impartiality to truth, is discovered in this objection.

**Object. 6.** "Say, some suppose this, doctrine is true, what use or service is it of to men?"

I answer, it is our indispensible duty to make diligent search after divine truth. We cannot be excused in slight enquiries into what God has revealed in his word, by this vain pretence, that we are unable to conceive what advantage may arise to us from the discoveries we make of some truths contained therein. Again: This objection is a very unbecoming reflection on the infinite wisdom and goodness of God; for it supposes that he has revealed something that is not profitable to his people, which must be esteemed a soul imputation on the divine perfections: For it is not to be imagined that God would, or can, reveal any doctrine to men, which is not in it self advantageous to them, however they may abuse it; wherefore this objection deserves to be treated with contempt. Farther, this doctrine, in my opinion, stands and falls with the important truths of God's everlasting love to his people; their eternal election in Christ, and the eternal covenant of grace. That Christ loved and delighted in his people from everlasting, is evident from these words, "my delights were with the sons of men (Proverbs 8:31.)." When did Christ thus delight in his people? The answer is, "before the mountains were settled, before the hills were brought forth; while as yet the earth was not made, nor the fields, nor the higher part of the dust of the earth: That is to say, before the world was formed And

the Father then took the same delight in there persons: Now as they stood charged with sin, and under condemnation, or, as considered in themselves, they were not the objects of the divine Persons pleasure, but as clear from guilt, and justified in the perfect righteousness of the Mediator. That they were chosen in Christ, cannot be disputed; and, as viewed in him, they were never objects of condemnation, but always of Justification. If there is an eternal covenant of grace, in which Christ engaged to pay their debts, by virtue of such his engagement they really became his, and the persons of the elect were acquitted of them by God and Christ, and also were justified in their account: Whence it appears that eternal Justification is of the same weight and use as there doctrines are, for it is inseparably connected with them.

**Object. 7.** “Those who are objects of God’s wrath, cannot be justified at the time they are so. All the elect are objects of God’s displeasure and wrath, before conversion, is evident from there words: “And were by nature children of wrath, even as others (Ephesians 2:3.).” Therefore they are not justified before they believe.

I answer, that they are children full of wrath, or enmity against God, whilst in unbelief: And in that sense they may be called children of wrath, as they are of disobedience. It is therefore true of them in an active sense. Farther, I grant that they are also children of wrath in a passive sense, or that they are under a sentence of condemnation by the law before regeneration. Zanchy has well observed, in his excellent book *de natura Dei*, that the wrath of God is to be taken in different senses: “*First*, it signifies the certain and most just will, and decree of God, to avenge or punish the injuries done to himself and his church; thus with John 3:36. He that believeth not on the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him: That is, just vengeance against him is confirmed by the decree of God.” The elect are not objects of God’s wrath in this sense, but “are vessels of mercy, which God has afore prepared to glory (Romans 9:23.).” “*Secondly*, it intends the threatenings of punishment. *Lastly*, it imports the effects of wrath, or penalties, and the avenging of injuries.” Now the elect are secured from the punishment due to their sins, by God’s decree; for “they are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9.);” And also by Christ’s satisfaction, “who has made peace for them by the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:20.).”

Therefore it is only in the second sense that they are children of wrath; which is perfectly consistent with their interest in God’s love and delight, as they are in, and members of Christ, and with their complete Justification in him, their foederal head. The law doth not consider men as elect, or non-elect, but as transgressors; and, as

such, condemns them. But as God put the elect into Christ, or united them to him in eternal election, he views and considers them in him, and so justifies them, and takes infinite pleasure in their persons as members of the Mediator, in whom he always had the fullest satisfaction and delight; tho' they are under a sentence of condemnation by the law, as violaters of it, while in unbelief.

**Thus I have considered all the objections which I have met with, that seem to have any weight in them against the doctrine of eternal Justification; and have, as I hope, fully answered them; tho' that I freely submit to the judgment of candid and impartial readers;** and shall think my self obliged to any such, if they will take the pains to inform me of any mistakes I may have been guilty of: But I shall not, in the least, be concerned at the treatment which this performance may meet with, from a warm and censorious adversary; having this inward pleasure, that it was the cause of truth, and no lower view, which moved me to this undertaking.

## SERMON 2

### 2 SAMUEL 23:5.

“Although my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.”

### THE COVENANT OF GRACE OPENED

*IN A SERMON Occasioned by the DEATH OF Mrs. Margaret Busfield WHO Departed this Life, May 13th, 1734 By JOHN BRINE LONDON: 1734 Printed for Aaron WARD at the King's Arms, in Little-Britain.*

It has pleased God, the Sovereign Disposer of all things, to remove by death an honorable member of this community to whom these words were very useful and instructive: for which reason she desired they might be publicly improved after her decease, with a view to the edification of the saints and conversion of sinners.

They are some of the last words which *David* spoke, as we are informed, in the first verse of the chapter; that is, the last which he spoke by inspiration. There is a very beautiful and elegant Preface to them, in which *David* gives an account of himself, in these respects: his parentage, *David* the son of *Jesse*. This is an eminent instance of

his humility. He was not ashamed of his low and mean descent, though an illustrious and powerful monarch. Besides, he mentions his call and unction to the royal station, which he filled up with so much honor. Also he declares his admirable gift of composing sweet and spiritual songs, for the use and edification of the church. Further, he acquaints us Who was the efficient cause of his spiritual composure, and the words now to be considered, viz., God. He spake as he was divinely guided, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my tongue.* The Holy Ghost was the Author and Inditer. *The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me.* Some think the Doctrine of the Trinity is not obscurely hinted at in these words: By the *Spirit of the Lord*, they understand the Third Person; the first by the *God of Israel*, and the second the Lord Jesus Christ by the *Rock of Israel*, who really is the Rock of Ages, on which the church is securely built. Then he gives the necessary character of a governor, and describes the happiness and flourishing estate of a prince so qualified; serenity, peace, and increasing glory attend his rule (2 Samuel 23:2, 3). Some suppose he intends the Messiah, Who is a King that reigns in Righteousness, and Whose subjects are blessed with peace and prosperity, under His most just administrations.

The words of the text are now introduced, *Although my House be not so with God*, that is to say, I have not so pleasing and happy a prospect in my family, yet that Covenant which God has made with me, is my support and comfort. Many irregularities were in his house; Tamar was ravished by *Amnon*, who was afterwards murder'd upon the advice of *Absolom*. He raised an unnatural rebellion against *David*, banished him from the royal city, and miserably perished in pursuing his traitorous design. *Adonijah*, a favorite son, attempts to seat himself on the throne by violence, for which usurpation he was slain (2 Samuel 13:14; 28:15; 1 Kings 2:25). These were melancholy facts, which, doubtless, very much depressed the mind of the *Psalmist*, but the Covenant of Grace furnished him with relief and comfort under them. *Glassius* upon the words says, “The sense is, although in the administration of my kingdom I have, indeed, done many things advantageously, and with great happiness, yet all this glory of my government is perishing and mortal: And if it be compared with the Kingdom of my Son, that is, the Messiah, it is obscure, and as a withered branch and trunk, which doth not sprout. This seems to be the plain meaning of this place.”

This Covenant filled him with solid joy and satisfaction, although he was conscious to himself of many imperfections, because he

evidently saw that his salvation was secured by it; wherefore I conclude, that the Covenant of Grace is here designed.

***My method in treating on the words of the text will be as follows:***

***First,*** I shall shew that the Covenant of Grace was made with the Elect in Christ, as their public Head and Representative.

***Secondly,*** That this Covenant is of Eternal date.

***Thirdly,*** the wise Order and Disposition of All things in this Covenant.

***Fourthly,*** The Stability and Firmness of this Agreement.

***Fifthly,*** That our Whole Salvation is contained in it.

***Sixthly,*** That this Covenant is equal to the utmost Desires of the saints.

***Lastly,*** That this Covenant furnishes believers with Joy and Comfort, under the most afflictive dispensations of Providence.

***First, The Covenant of Grace was made with the Elect in Christ, as their public Head and Representative.***

It was not personally entered into with them, when we read of God's making a Covenant with His people, which we sometimes do, as in these Words, *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David* (Isaiah 55:3). And elsewhere, *I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn a way from them to do them good* (Jeremiah 32:40). By such modes of expression we are to understand the discovery of Covenant promises and blessings to the saints, and not taking them into Covenant; for they are interested in the Covenant of Grace, previous to any such act of God upon them; which I apprehend is very evident from these things. If the Covenant of Grace is made with the elect in their own persons, it must be either before or after their regeneration. It cannot be before, because in an unregenerate state they have no proper love to, or desires to fear and obey God; and therefore they are incapable of devoting themselves to His service. There is no disposition in them to such a spiritual act. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be* (Romans 8:7). If the Covenant of Grace is made with them, after, or upon their regeneration, then they partake of one eminent blessing of that Covenant, before they are interested in it, which is not to be supposed; for a right to the benefits of the Covenant depends upon an interest therein. That faith is a gift, the Apostle expressly affirms; *By grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God* (Ephesians 2:8,9). Nor is it less manifest, that it is a

blessing secured to the elect by the Covenant of Grace; Faith and all other graces are absolutely promised therein, as we learn from these words, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power* (Psalm 110:3). Therefore those to whom this grace is communicated, must be interested in the Covenant of Grace before, and in order to the production of it in their Hearts. Besides, elect-infants who die in infancy, are incapable of entering into covenant with God; or they cannot give a personal consent unto the Covenant of Grace: They are unable to dedicate and devote themselves to the service of God, and of consequence no covenant can be entered into with them; yet doubtless they are saved by virtue of an interest in the Covenant of Grace, which sufficiently proves that our personal consent to that Covenant is not necessary, in order to partake of its benefits. It is readily granted, that the saints under divine influences give up themselves to the Lord, and engage to serve Him as assisted by His Grace; but such a dedication of themselves, to holiness and the fear of God, gives them no further interest in the Covenant of Grace, than what they had before; for all their sanctification and holiness is derived from that Covenant.

That there was a covenant entered into between God and Christ, and that that is the Covenant of Grace, I shall now endeavor to clear and prove. A covenant is an agreement between two parties, wherein the one proposes terms and conditions to be performed, the other engages to fulfill those conditions; which agreement is a formal covenant. Such a contract was settled between God and Christ, as the Holy Scriptures sufficiently demonstrate. God the Father is brought in and represented by the Prophet, as proposing to Christ a work wherein His Glory was nearly concerned. Thus, *Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified*; and at first offers but low terms to Him as a reward for His service, that is to say, the salvation of the elect among the Jews: Whereupon Christ says, *I have labored in vain, I have spent My Strength for naught and in vain; yet surely My Judgment is with the Lord, and My Work is with my God* (Isaiah 49:3,4,6): i.e., if it is Thy Pleasure that My saving benefits should be confined to the elect among that people, I readily submit to Thy Will. After which God the Father enlarges His offer, promises to give Him *for a Light to the Gentiles, that he might be his Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*: which proposal gave Christ a full satisfaction. Wherefore He readily consented to undertake and finish the work, that the Father assigned to Him, which consists of several branches.

**1.** God propounded to His Son, that He should assume our nature into a personal union with Himself, which was absolutely necessary

to our redemption: For unless He became man, He could not bear and expiate our guilt. Wherefore, God, to infallibly secure our recovery and salvation, decreed and fore-ordained, that His Son should appear in our nature. Hence the Apostle observes, that Christ was *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, and was manifest for us in these last times* (1 Peter 1:20). As I apprehend we have Christ's full and free consent to this, expressed in these words; *Then said I, lo I come* (Psalm 40:7): i.e., since it is Thy Will that I should visit the lower world, and reside among men, I cheerfully agree to it.

**2.** Another proposal was, that He should stand in our law place, or stead, and become our Substitute, that He might deliver us from the menaces of the violated Covenant of Works. As the time of His Incarnation was settled in counsel and covenant between Him and the Father, which seems evident from these words of the Apostle, *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son* (Galatians 4:4, 5), so also His being *made under the Law, to redeem them that are under the Law*, was a matter pre-determined and before agreed to.

**3.** The Father propounded to him to obey the law for us. We are unable to exhibit such an obedience to it, which is absolutely necessary to our justification, because our nature is very much weakened and vitiated by sin. One branch of the Mediator's Work was to *bring in an everlasting Righteousness* (Daniel 9:24); which He has done. That Righteousness is accepted for and imputed to us, and will always avail to our acceptance in the sight of God.

**4.** It was the will of God, that Christ should bear our guilt, without which it could not possibly be removed. He proposes this affair to Christ in this manner; *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin* (Isaiah 53:10). His being a Sin-Offering, necessarily supposes a charge of guilt, which always must be in order to suffering of any penal evil. Thus the same Prophet affirms, that the *Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all* (Isaiah 53:6): And the Apostle asserts, that *He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (2 Corinthians 5:21). The ponderous load of our guilt was not laid on Christ, contrary to His own Will, but with His free and voluntary consent.

**5.** God propounded to Christ that He should suffer the demerit of sin, or to die for us, that we might be delivered from eternal death, which is the proper reward demerited by our offenses. To this He freely consented, and laid himself under a federal obligation to

become obedient unto death; yea, even the death of the Cross. His crucifixion was what He could not avoid, consistent with fidelity to His own free engagement. Wherefore He observes to His disciples, *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and then enter into his glory* (Luke 24:26)? According to the Father's Will and His voluntary promise, He was to die before His advancement to honor and dignity.

**6.** The Father proposed to Christ to take the care and charge of the elect. Those who were the objects of God's special Love and free choice, He gave into Christ's Hands. Hence He says unto the Father, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them Me* (John 17:6). With what view this was done, it is easy to collect from these words of our Lord; *I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day* (John 6:38,39). That is to say, it is the pleasure and fixed determination of my Father, that none of those should perish, whom He has made My care and charge. Christ, with the utmost freedom promised to redeem and preserve them safe; wherefore when He shall have collected all these persons together, he will present them to the Father, with saying, *Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me.*

As Christ consented to fulfill the whole will of the Father, concerning our redemption, the Father promised several things to him, some of which respect Himself, personally considered; such as,

**1.** That He would suitably furnish and qualify Him for the work of mediation, to the discharge of which an extraordinary unction of the Holy Ghost, in His graces and gifts were necessary, as well on account of the greatness and difficulty of the undertaking, as for that He was to be an Head of life and influence to all the elect; for *of His fulness they were to receive, and grace for grace* (John 1:16). Such an uncommon measure of the Spirit He received from the Father, is evident from these words, *thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows* (Psalm 45:7), the same is affirmed by the Evangelist; *for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him* (John 3:34).

**2.** Assistance and support in it, of such a nature is this promise; *He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the Earth, and the isles shall wait for his law* (Isaiah 42); which federal engagement on the Father's part, animated and encouraged Him in the most difficult branch of His Work, at the time of His dolorous

sufferings; when, *He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting* (Isaiah 1:6); for then He said, *The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded, therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed* (Isaiah 1:7).

**3.** As a reward for His Service, when He appointed Him work He promised Him wages; for which reason it is said, *His reward is with him, and his work before him* (Isaiah 40:10): which was,

(1.) The salvation of all His seed. On the condition of making His soul an offering for sin, the Father engaged that He should see His seed, prolong His days, and that the pleasure of the Lord, *i.e.*, the salvation of sinners should prosper in His hand.

(2.) Everlasting honor and dignity. It was the will of God that Christ should suffer on the Cross; but as a reward for such an eminent instance of obedience to Him, He promised Him an immortal crown; on which account it is said, that *his glory is great in the Father's salvation*; (that is to say, which He decreed and contrived) *Honor and Majesty are laid upon him* (Psalm 21:4,5); *because he became obedient unto death; yea, even the death of the cross. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name* (Philippians 2:8,9); *i.e.*, a glory far superior to that of men or angels. These things were the joy that was set before him, which caused him to endure the cross with so much cheerfulness and courage, and to despise the shame. There are other promises which have their immediate reference to the elect, though primarily made to the Lord Jesus Christ in their behalf; such as, *I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more* (Hebrews 8:12): All promises of pardon, peace, justification, regeneration, final perseverance and eternal life, concern His members. These transactions of the Father and Son amount unto a full, formal and explicit covenant, which is called a Covenant of Peace; because the terms and articles of our peace were agreed on in it. *The mountains shall depart; and the bills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee* (Isaiah 54:10).

Some suppose, that this is not the Covenant of Grace, but another distinct from it; though without reason, as a judicious writer observes, who upon this argument delivers himself thus: "It may be asked, whether there is not a real difference, between what several divines call the Covenant of Redemption or Suretyship, made by God the Father with Christ, and that which they call the Covenant of

Grace, or Reconciliation, made by God with believers through Christ. To this I answer, custom without reason, has given a kind of sanction of this way of speaking, and many persons of great piety and learning have fallen into it, without considering the bad use men of corrupt minds make of it; turning what they call the Covenant of Grace into a more rigorous Covenant of Works to us than *Adam's* Covenant was.

**1.** The Distinction of the Covenant of Redemption and the Covenant of Grace, is a distinction without any real or material difference, it is to make two covenants of Grace of one. The Covenant of Redemption, as it is called and described by them, who say it is a distinct Covenant, is of pure Grace." In order to prove that this is the Covenant of Grace, and not another distinct from it, I would offer these things to be considered,

The Distinction of the Covenant of Redemption from the Covenant of Grace is unscriptural; I cannot apprehend, that the sacred Oracles give any countenance to it; the Word of God is so far from supporting this distinction, that it seems to militate against it ; we therein read but of two covenants, in which the eternal state of men is concerned, the one is called, a Law or *Covenant of Works*; the other is called, *the Law of Faith* (Romans 3:27); that is to say, a Covenant of Grace; since the Scriptures give us an account but of two covenants wherein the future state of man is interested: It is anti-scriptural to conceive of the covenant which God made with Christ, as the Head of the elect, as distinct from the Covenant of Grace; for hereby an addition of a third covenant is made to the two covenants, of which the Divine Records treat.

**2.** This compact is the result of pure Grace; it was merely the Love and free Favour of God the Father, that moved Him to exercise His Wisdom in the contrivance of our Redemption, and to enter into covenant with His Son, to secure this stupendous design: nor can any other reason be assigned, why Christ so voluntarily became our Surety, or undertook for us, than His boundless Goodness and Grace.

**3.** It was founded upon a purpose of Grace; the resolution which God fixed upon in His eternal mind to bring us to Glory, was the effect of infinite Love; hence our election is called an *Election of Grace* (Romans 11:5). That was an act put forth by God, without any external motive; it was His own Sovereign Will, and nothing else that determined Him in this matter. This purpose of God rose up into a covenant between Him and His Son.

**4.** All Grace is promised in this Covenant; doubtless, that Covenant in which all Grace is granted to the elect, is the Covenant of Grace; but thus it is in this compact.

The privilege of Adoption in it, is this, God engaged to be the God and Father of Christ, as Mediator and Head of His seed in this Covenant, as is evident from these words, *He shall cry unto me, my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation* (Psalm 89:26). Now by the same act that God became the Father of Christ as Mediator, He also became the Father of His members; and therefore our Lord says unto His disciples, *I ascend to my God and to your God, to my Father and to your Father* (John 20:17). Again, remission of sin is contained in this Covenant, as the very nature of it plainly demonstrates; Christ on His part promised to bear our guilt, and suffer the demerit of it; and God the Father on His part engaged fully to acquit and discharge us; for he was in Christ, (i.e., from Everlasting, when this Covenant was entered into) *reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them* (2 Corinthians 5:19). Besides, justification is a privilege given in this eternal compact, which we learn from the words of God the Father; *by His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many,* "for He shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:11). Moreover, the grace of regeneration is treasured up herein, as is manifest from these words, *thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power* (Psalm 110:3); that is, Thy members who are naturally perverse and obstinate, shall freely bow to Thy scepter, and submit to Thy laws, as King in Zion. Add to these things, final perseverance is insured to the elect, by this Covenant; this gracious benefit is fully and clearly expressed in this sweet promise; *As for Me, this is My Covenant with them, i.e., those who turn from transgression in Jacob,* and are described by that character in the preceding verse, *My Spirit that is upon thee,* that is to say, *the Redeemer who came to Zion; and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds' seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever* (Isaiah 59:20). Young converts may be called the seed of the church, because they are born, nourished and brought up there; for of Zion it shall be said, *that this and that man was born in her, and the Highest himself shall establish her* (Psalm 87:5). The carnal seed of believers are not intended, but the spiritual seed of Christ: I add once more, that everlasting life is given to the elect, in this Covenant; this is very evident, from the words of the Apostle, *in Hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began* (Titus 1:2): thus the members of Christ were blessed with all spiritual

blessings in this eternal Covenant, which was entered into by God and Christ before time commenced; therefore it is the Covenant of Grace. For though, as Mr. Petto observes, “In covenants between princes, some articles may be concerning prerogatives and royalties, peculiar to them in their public capacities, which the people share not in, but in them, as striking sail, etc. Other grants may concern the people in their private capacities, as merchants, mariners, etc., yet prince and people are within the same contract: so doubtless there may be divers grants to Jesus Christ in his public capacity, in the office of mediator, and other promises made to his seed; yet king and subjects, head and members, are within the same covenant, as the principal debtor, and the Surety are within the same obligation.”

There being some promises in the Covenant which regard Christ, as personally considered, and others that concern His people, is not a foundation sufficient to support the distinction we have been now considering.

In the opinion of the Assembly of Divines, this is the Covenant of Grace; thus they express themselves concerning it in their larger Catechism: “The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ the second Adam, and with all the Elect in him, as his Seed.” This is a very full and clear definition of the Covenant of Grace, and plainly shows that they understood the agreement between God and Christ, to be that Covenant; but to proceed.

**Secondly, This Covenant is of Eternal date, which I apprehend may be thus made evident.**

**1.** It is called an everlasting Covenant: *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David* (Isaiah 55:3). And elsewhere, *Now the God of Peace which brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant* (Hebrews 13:2 0). It is so called, not only because the benefits of it will eternally continue, but also on the account of its being actually entered into, before time began; which will further appear by what follows.

**2.** Christ is an everlasting Counsellor: Some of his titles are *wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father* (Isaiah 9:6). Dr. Goodwin observes, that Everlastingness which is affixed to him as a Father, is also true of him as a Counsellor. It is with relation to this Covenant, that He bears such a character, being jointly concerned with the Father in the contrivance of our salvation, which is agreed on in it. He was in His bosom from all eternity, and privy to the secret purposes of His heart.

**3.** He was invested with the office of Mediator before time began, which is manifest from the words of wisdom of Christ: *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was* (Proverbs 8:23): *i.e.*, I was constituted the Head and Mediator of those persons on whom My delights were fixed. It is the Covenant of Grace, of which He is the Mediator, and therefore the Covenant is of the same date with the office and capacity which he bears in that Covenant: but He stood in the capacity of Mediator before the world was framed; hence it follows, the constitution of this Covenant was in eternity.

**4.** Grace was given to the elect in Christ before the world was formed, as I have already shown. *God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began* (1 Timothy 1:9). All Grace and Glory were granted to Christ as the federal Head and Representative of His people, in the Covenant of Grace; since therefore this was done before the commencement of time, it may be justly concluded, that this Covenant is eternal.

**5.** If it was not thus, the Old Testament saints could not be saved by virtue of the Covenant of Grace: They were saved even as we, by the very same Covenant. It was from hence that they were furnished with all necessary supplies of Grace, as believers now are. God did not save them by one Covenant, and under this dispensation brings us to happiness by another. Though Christ had not actually accomplished the work of redemption, yet having re-stipulated and agreed with the Father to perform it in the appointed time; all the blessings of the new Covenant were communicated to the elect of God, as much as if it had been really completed, but with a view to the future Satisfaction of Christ, promised in this Covenant; which seems clear from those words of the inspired writer, *And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance* (Hebrews 9:15). I pass on,

***Thirdly, To consider the wise Order and Disposition of All things in this Covenant.***

The original word signifies aptly or fitly disposed and ordered. All things relating to our salvation are most wisely and beautifully disposed in this federal agreement, for the Glory of God, abasing the creature, the security of the church, and the confounding of Satan.

**1.** This Covenant is most wisely ordered for the Honor of God. The Glory of the Father as the Contriver of our Redemption, is greatly displayed in this compact. He is to be considered as the first Mover in this weighty affair: He drew the plan and model of it, and concerted the best methods to accomplish it. The Honor of the Mediator is herein highly advanced, His Glory is great in our salvation. It was agreed on, that He should perform the work of our redemption, in every branch of it, that all the glory arising from thence might be attributed to Him. Nor is the Honor of the divine Spirit less secured by this Covenant; for as the Father projected the way of our recovery, and the Son completed the work of our redemption, agreeable to his Word and Promise in this great transaction, the Holy Ghost discovers and applies what the Father and Son have done for us. Wherefore the three divine Persons equally divide the glory of our salvation, according to everlasting agreement. Besides, the Perfections of God have a most beauteous display in our recovery, as it was fixed and settled in this Covenant. Wisdom shines with an eminent lustre in the whole affair; hence the revelation of salvation, by a crucified Jesus, or the Gospel, is called *the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory* (1 Corinthians 2:7). How the Law might be fulfilled, Justice satisfied, and sinners saved, was worthy of infinite Wisdom to contrive. Again, the Power of God is abundantly discovered in this business, upon which account, Christ as crucified is called *the Power, as well as the Wisdom of God* (1 Corinthians 1:14). A finite or created strength was insufficient to support our Lord under the intolerable pressure of guilt and sufferings which He bare and underwent: Divine Power is also manifest in quickening the souls of the elect in their regeneration, and carrying on that work in opposition to sin and Satan: ‘Tis only by the Power of God that *we are kept through faith unto salvation* (1 Peter. 1:5). Moreover, the Love and Grace of God is gloriously displayed in this Covenant. It was mere favor in God that moved him to ordain Christ to be the Mediator and Surety of it, to give our persons and all spiritual blessings into His Hand: it was pure Grace in Christ which induced Him to undertake for us to secure our eternal felicity: ‘Tis stupendous and boundless Grace that forgives our abounding sins (Romans 5:20,21) according to the full and precious promises of this Covenant. Farther, Justice has an equal shine with all the other attributes of God: The honor of Mercy is not advanced to the prejudice of Justice, but that hath the same Glory with Grace. The Righteousness and Justice of God is clearly seen, and fully vindicated in the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons, through the obedience and blood of Christ; so that He

appears to be just, in justifying of those who believe in Jesus (Romans 3:26). Thus there is a perfect harmony between Grace and Justice, Goodness and Holiness in our salvation, which is expressed in these words; *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other* (Psalm 85:10). Add to these things, the Faithfulness of God is evidently seen, in fulfilling Covenant promises, and communicating Covenant blessings to His people; for His Faithfulness He will not suffer to fail (Psalm 59:33), but will perform all that He hath promised to the elect, in this Covenant; says the Apostle, *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it* (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Believers shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing, to shew the Lord is upright; he is their rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him (Psalm 92:14,15). Therefore the attributes of God are greatly glorified in this Covenant.

**2.** It is disposed in the best manner for abasing the creature. Man is naturally full of pride and arrogance, entertains a very high opinion of his ability, and the worth of his services; falsely imagines that it is within the compass of his own power to secure his future happiness: He is really poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17), yet conceits himself to be rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing. This haughty disposition in man, God is determined to bring down, and to lay his glory in the dust. In order to which, every branch of our salvation is of Grace, in direct opposition to works; as the Apostle affirms, *By Grace are ye saved, through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8, 9). All boasting and pride are entirely excluded by the Covenant of Grace; for where is boasting? it is excluded: by what law? of works? nay, but by the Law of Faith (Romans 3:27); that is, by the New Covenant, or the Gospel.

**3.** The Covenant is well ordered for the security of the church. Had our Salvation rested on the uncertain will of man, how precarious, nay, impracticable would it have been? But since it is wholly dependent on the immutable Will of God, it is indubitable, certain, and sure. Grace alone could secure it; and therefore it is of faith, that it might be by Grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed (Romans 4:16). Pardon, peace, nor justification, nay, not any of the blessings of the New Covenant are suspended, till we have performed conditions on our part; but all of them are effectually secured to us, by the mutual engagements of God and Christ in this everlasting Covenant, which are a solid and firm foundation.

**4.** It is most agreeably disposed for the confounding of Satan. When man was in a state of innocence, Satan formed a design against him, resolved to bring him into the same miserable circumstances with himself, if possible; which to effect, he tempts him to violate the Law of his Creator: man unhappily yields to his temptation, acts contrary to the express command of God. It was no small satisfaction to this fallen spirit, to see his malicious design so far succeed; but that which he thought would have issued in the eternal destruction of man, God takes the advantage of, to render His own Glory the more conspicuous, and to advance apostate man to a far higher dignity than that of which he was possessed in his primitive estate. According to the gracious Decree of God, the works of the Devil are destroyed, his design is frustrated, and eternal confusion is thrown upon himself: *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil* (1 John 3:8).

#### ***Fourthly, The Covenant of Grace is Stable, Firm and Sure.***

The Stability and Firmness of it may be concluded from these things:

**1.** The Love of God, which gave rise to this Covenant, is invariable: it is without any alteration, and always the same. God freely fixed His favor upon the elect; and not because He foresaw any qualifications in them which recommended them to His Goodness; the direct contrary of that is true: for when He placed His Love upon them, *He knew that their necks would be as iron sinews, and their brows brass* (Isaiah 48:4). As the foreviews of their obstinacy did not prevent His kind thoughts concerning them, their unworthiness cannot cause Him to change. His Immutability is the solid foundation of their security, which is affirmed by Himself in these words; *I am the Lord, I change not; and therefore ye the Sons of Jacob are not consumed* (Malachi 3:6). His Love admits of no vicissitudes; it is as unchangeable as Himself, yea, it is Himself; and He will as soon cease to be, as cease to love His people, says the Apostle, *God is Love* (1 John 4:16): that is, it is His Nature and Essence. The interest which the saints have in Divine favor, can never be lost; nothing shall ever separate them from the *Love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord* (Romans 3:35-38): therefore the Covenant of Grace, which is the result of that Love, will eternally remain inviolable and sure.

**2.** It is founded upon a steady purpose of Grace. The designs of Love which God has formed in His infinite Mind about His elect are

unalterable. They are infinitely more firm than mountains of brass: we have His own Word for it; that *His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure* (Isaiah 46:10). Eternal Election, on which the everlasting Covenant is fixed as its proper basis, is *a foundation that standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are His* (2 Timothy 2:19); from whence the stability of that Covenant may, with very good reason, be inferred.

**3.** This may be argued from the inviolable Word of God. The blessings of this Covenant are all promised by that God Who cannot lie. If any of the promises of the New Covenant should fail of their accomplishment, the Truth of God would be impeached; but that shall not, nay, never can be: for *His Covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his Lips* (Psalm 89:34). Therefore the Covenant of Grace is more firm than the most immovable things in nature, which is expressly affirmed: *The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee* (Isaiah 54:10).

**4.** God hath confirmed this Covenant with His solemn Oath. Thus He speaks concerning it; *Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David my Servant* (Psalm 89:35). Wherefore the Covenant of Grace is forever established by God's Word and His Oath. They are the two immutable things wherein it is impossible for him to lie. If the God of Truth cannot break His Promise, nor act contrary to His Oath, then the Covenant is stable and firm; but neither of these He can do, for that were to deny Himself.

**5.** Christ has ratified this Covenant, by fulfilling all the Conditions of it. The work which the Father gave him to do, He has fully completed, and thereby confirmed the Covenant of Grace. That no part of the Father's Will concerning our redemption remains to be fulfilled, our Lord Himself assures us, by the last words which He delivered on the Cross; for just before He resigned His Soul, He said, *It is finished* (John 19:30); that is, I have now perfected the whole pleasure of My Father, concerning My Sufferings to atone for sin. Now as Christ on His part has punctually performed the utmost of what He promised, Justice requires on the Father's part, that He make good all His federal engagements to Christ. From the whole we may strongly conclude that this Covenant is stable, firm, and sure. It is sure in its promises; not one of those many sweet and gracious promises, with which it is so well stored, shall fail of its fulfillment; for *all the promises of God in him are, yea, and in him, Amen, to the glory of God by us* (2 Corinthians 1:10). The blessings

of this Covenant are sure, therefore called sure mercies; *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David* (Isaiah 55:3). The remission of our sins, the acceptance of our persons, effectual calling, final perseverance, and eternal blessedness in the fruition of God are all as certain and sure as the unchangeable Love, steady Purpose, firm Promise, and solemn Oath of the God of Truth, and Faithfulness can make them: wherefore not one good thing shall fail, of all that the Lord hath promised. Let the saints adore the free Grace and infinite Goodness of God, which has rendered their everlasting felicity thus secure.

***Fifthly, All our salvation is contained in this Covenant.***

*For this is all my Salvation.* Some think Christ is designed, He is sometimes so called. *Simeon gives him this character; Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation* (Luke 2:29,30). He may very justly be styled salvation, because *there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved* (Acts 4:12). The whole of our recovery and redemption was effected by him: He is our pardon, peace, justification, and sanctification; yea, our all, and in all. Besides, He is given to us, and all things with Him, in this everlasting Covenant. Salvation itself may be intended; all the various Parts of which were fixed and settled in this Covenant. Our acquittance and discharge from guilt was promised by God on the condition of Christ's suffering the demerit of our crimes. The acceptance of our persons was agreed to upon the terms of Christ's being made under and obeying the Law for us. Grace and glory were absolutely granted to us in this compact; every branch of our salvation comes within the compass of it. Wherefore it is a very dangerous mistake, that men may safely depend upon the uncovenanted Mercy of God for eternal happiness; because it is only through, by, and in the Covenant of Grace, that Divine Goodness is discovered to poor sinners. But I apprehend it is not necessary to enlarge here, having before observed what promises God made to Christ, concerning our Salvation, when this Covenant was entered into between Them.

***Sixthly, The Covenant of Grace is equal to the largest Wishes, and most extensive Desires of the saints.***

*And all my desire,* says the Psalmist Some understand this of Christ, in Whom really there is every thing which is excellent and desirable: hence He is called *the Desire of all Nations* (Haggai 2:7). Infinite Excellencies center in His Person, all Beauties and Perfections reside in Him, and everything that is necessary to our happiness

dwells in Him, and flows from Him: the Amiability of His Person, and the Fulness of His Grace, render Him the proper Object of the saints' highest love and pleasure. He indeed is all their delight. It may intend that ample and large provision which is made in the everlasting Covenant, for the supply, consolation, and future felicity of God's people. Under the influences of Grace, they ardently desire the extirpation of sin, and a perfect conformity to Christ; greater nearness to God, more clear and lasting prospects of His Love, and a fuller knowledge of the mysteries of Grace: they cannot but aspire after, yea, they vehemently long for an uninterrupted enjoyment of God; nor can any thing less afford them a full and constant satisfaction.

All these things, and far more than we are able to express or conceive, are comprehended in that one promise of this Covenant. *They shall be my People, and I will be their God* (Jeremiah 32:38). Therefore it may well be called all our desire, and all our delight.

***Lastly, The Covenant of Grace furnishes the saints with suitable Support and Consolation, under the most affective dispensations of Providence.***

*Although He make it not to grow,* Some think the Messiah is intended in these words, and take this to be the sense; though the promised Branch of Jesse and David doth not as yet appear, or is not come, yet He is all my salvation, and all my desire; and He certainly will bud, grow, and flourish in the time appointed in this Covenant. Others thus; Christ, Who is all my salvation, and all my desire, shall not grow as the tender grass of the field, which soon fades, decays, and withers, but He shall always reign and govern. There be others who understand it of the disorders and irregularities of David's family, and of those afflictions that attended him in his royal station, under which the Covenant of Grace was His support and comfort. That this Covenant is well suited to comfort the saints under pressing difficulties and trials, thus appears;

**1.** The Covenant of Grace has severed them from all penal evil. No curse attends their afflictions, however great or heavy they may be; for it was agreed and settled by God and Christ in this compact, that the curse due to their offenses should be inflicted on their Surety: therefore *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1). There is not the least drop of wrathful anger, or vindictive displeasure poured into their cup.

**2.** They spring from Love, as we learn from these words; *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten* (Revelation 3:19). In the Covenant of Grace a rod is laid up for the correction of Christ's seed; but from

the nature of the Covenant, we must necessarily conclude, that everlasting Love provided it, and that infinite Compassion only uses it.

**3.** All afflictions, under the influence of this Covenant, serve the true interest of their souls. The apostle affirms, *That all things work together for good to those that love God, and are the called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28). They are brought nearer to God, are weaned from the things of this world, and their graces, faith, hope, and patience, are exercised by the tribulations which attend them (Romans 5:4,5).

**4.** The Covenant of Grace secures their deliverance out of all afflictions. *In this world they shall have tribulation* (John 16:33): but to this world, blessed by God, it is limited; for none will invade them in the next. A period will be fixed to their lives and their griefs at the same time. When we say that a believer is dead, we pronounce him so from all sin and sorrow. These things being thus, it may well be allowed that the Covenant of Grace administers suitable comforts under distresses. An instance of which we have in the person, whose decease occasioned this discourse. Many things might be mentioned concerning her, worthy of our imitation; but I shall not enlarge on her character: her manner of life was well known to many of you. This I think may be said of her, without any suspicion of flattery to her honorable memory, that the Grace of God, which bringeth salvation, and has appeared to all men, taught her to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. Her afflictions were many, which so far as I am able to judge from my acquaintance with her, she bore with patience, resignation, and cheerfulness.

In her last tedious and heavy one, she was generally comfortable, and the nearer her time of dissolution drew nigh, her faith grew stronger in Covenant-Love. When I paid her my last visit, she spoke very freely of divine things, with a remarkable degree of pleasure: but the state of her body being then very low, I was fearful speaking too much might be prejudicial to her, which I signified: She answered, “What can I say too much about my dear Lord? Can I talk too much about him who has done and suffered such great things for me?” Thus joyful she then was, at the prospect of approaching death. She now is, I doubt not, delivered out of all affliction and trouble, and received into the blessed mansions above, by her dear Saviour, with this rapturous invitation: *Come thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee, before the foundation of the world;* where the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne feeds,

and leads her to living fountains of water, and God wipes away all tears from her eyes.

## SERMON 3

### ZECHARIAH 2:5.

“For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a Wall of Fire round about, and will be the Glory in the Midst of her.”

### GOD: THE DEFENCE AND GLORY OF HIS CHURCH

THIS Prophecy was delivered about the Time of the *Jews* Return from *Babylon*, where they were in a State of Captivity seventy Years: In which the Prophet excites them to a speedy Departure out of their Enemies’ Country to their own Land, and encourages them to re-build the City of *Jerusalem*; assures them of Success in that Undertaking, altho’ it was attended with Difficulties which, to them, might seem insuperable.

IN order to obviate an Objection to the Safety of the City, which this People might form from the large Number, great Power, and Nearness of their Adversaries; the Lord, in these Words, declares, that he would be its Protector: *For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a Wall of Fire round about*; that is to say, I will securely guard and defend it, and consume all those who attempt to destroy it; and adds, that he would fill it with Glory, *and will be the Glory in the Midst of her*. The great Privileges which are promised, not only refer to this People, for they concern the whole Church in every Age and Period of Time.

*The Text furnishes us with this Doctrine, that God is the Defence and Glory of his Church:* This doctrinal Proposition consists of two Branches.

*First*, THAT the Church’s Safety and Security is in her God.

*Secondly*, THAT she derives all her Glory from him.

*First, I begin with the first Branch: The Church could not have subsisted in any Age, unless divine Power had been exerted to support and protect her.*

The People of God are not in a Capacity to defend themselves, or maintain their Interest, against the violent Attempts of indefatigable Enemies, which is evident from these Things:

**1.** THEY are much inferior in Number; the Church is but a small Collection of Persons out of the numerous Crowd in the World, hence Christ declares that his Followers are a little Flock; *fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* (Luke 12:32.)

THE Enemies of real Religion are far more, than its true, hearty, and constant Friends; it is the Multitude that let themselves to oppose the Cause of God, and only an inconsiderable Few, who appear in its Defence.

**2.** THE Church in general, is composed of Persons mean and contemptible; there is but a small Number of the Wealthy and Powerful, that have Humility enough to espouse and defend the despised Interest of a Redeemer. The Apostle's Observation holds true to this Day, *that not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called* (1 Corinthians 1:26.): Some indeed of a higher Rank are Instances of sovereign Grace, the Consideration of which should inflame their Zeal for the Honour of God, and quicken their Desires to contribute to the Spread of his Gospel: But the much greater Part of Believers are in low and obscure Life; therefore it is not to be expected that the Cause of Religion can be maintained by the Power and Influence of such as embrace it.

**3.** THE People of God are not equal in Wisdom and Policy to their Enemies: The Generality of those who profess the Name of Christ, are Persons of weak Understandings; therefore our Lord observes, *with Thankfulness to the Father, that he had hid the Mysteries of the Gospel from the wise and prudent, i.e. Men Superior Knowledge and Abilities, and revealed them to Babes;* that is to say, *to such as are of mean Capacities* (Matthew 11:25.): Nor will the Circumstances of these

Persons allow them to take the Methods for Improvement in Knowledge and Experience, as those in the opposite Interest are capable of; therefore the Cause of Christ is destitute of such temporal Assistance for its Support and Propagation, which the contrary to it is furnished with: These Things being thus, it must necessarily be allowed, that the Churches Defence and Security arises not from within her self.

**Secondly,** HER Enemies are ready to improve every Opportunity and Advantage which offer to disturb and distress her. The carnal

Mind of Man is filled with a fixed Aversion to God, and all spiritual Good, as the Apostle affirms, *the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be* (Romans 8:7.): And therefore the nearer any Saint approaches to the Likeness of God, the greater as the Hatred of wicked Men to him. Thus *Cain slew his Brother Abel, because his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous* (1 John 3:12.). This fettled Enmity in the Hearts of Men to powerful Godliness, pushes them on to treat the Professors of it with the greatest Severity: This Matter is capable of abundant Proof from the many Plots, and Conspiracies, which were formed against the old *Testament* Church before her Captivity in *Babylon*: But my Design is briefly to observe the Opposition which her Enemies made to obstruct and prevent the Re-building of the holy City and Temple; in which we shall discover Hypocrisy, Calumny, and inveterate Malice, *the common Principles upon which the Churches Opposers act.* It was predicted by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *Cyrus, King of Persia, should enact a Decree to impower the Jews to return to their own Land, and rebuild the Temple of the Lord, which Prediction had its exact Accomplishment at the Time prefixed, as Ezra informs us: Now in the first Year of Cyrus King of Persia, (that the Word of the Lord, by the Mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled) the Lord stirred up the Spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made a Proclamation throughout all his Kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, the Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and he hath charged me to build him an House at Jerusalem, which is in Judah* (Ezra 1:1, 2.). Whereupon the Principal and Chief of the People joyfully departed from *Babylon* to execute the Royal Will of *Cyrus*, who ordered that they should be furnished with every Thing requisite thereto. As loon as this Work was begun, the *Samaritans* pretended Alliance, and Friendship, with the *Jews*, and offered to assist them therein; yet not with any real Design to advance it, but to hinder its Progress, as their future Conduct evidently proves: Such Dissimulation and Hypocrisy is not unusual with the Church's Adversaries, in order to obtain the greater Advantage against her. These very Persons sent a Letter full of heavy and false Accusations to *Cambyses* (who in Scripture is called *Artaxerxes, and Ahasuerus*) the Son of *Cyrus*, against the People to whom they expressed so much Respect, representing them as full of seditious and rebellious Principles, which caused the King to give strict Order that a Stop should be put to the Work; and accordingly there was, with Expedition and great Force (Ezra 4.): Nor was it revived 'till the second Year of the Reign of *Darius*, who succeeded *Cambyses* on the Throne; at which Time also, the Enemies of the Church fought how to prevent its farther Success: But Providence

over-ruled the Methods they took to strengthen the Hands of those engaged therein (Ezra 5, 6.) *It is frequent with God, to turn the Measures of the Adversaries of his People to a far different Use, from what they design.*

THE City and Temple of God were rebuilt, notwithstanding the violent Opposition made against it by a large Number of implacable and malicious Adversaries, who stuck at *nothing* that might have obstructed the Work.

THUS *the Lord was a Wall of Fire round about it*; for this Undertaking was not effected by humane Force, or Policy, but by the miraculous Blessing of Providence, as we learn from these Words, “*Not by Might, nor by Power, but by my Spirit, faith the Lord of Hosts*” (Zechariah 4:6.).

As the Church, in the former Dispensation, was encompassed with Enemies, so under the present, she hath suffered many Afflictions from the Hands of powerful Adversaries.

WHEN Christianity was first planted, great Persecutions were raised against it by *Rome Pagan*, of which History informs us,

“Nevertheless, the Purity and Power of Religion exceedingly flourished; and large Numbers embraced the Christian Faith, being encouraged to it by the pious Lives and holy Triumphs of the Saints, when in the most *cruel Torments* that hellish Rage and Malice could invent”.

I AM of Opinion that the Interest of Christ never lost Ground by the strongest Oppositions its most inveterate Enemies have been able to make against it; Adversity has always proved more to the Advantage of the Church than Prosperity: This is evident in the different Turn which the Affairs of Religion took in the Reign of *Constantine*, the first Christian Emperor; for under his Government, Corruptions in Doctrine, and superstition in Worship, were soon introduced by many *ambitious Clergy*, who valued the Christian Religion no farther than the Profession of it served to promote their temporal *Interests*.

AND to this Cause, I apprehend, are owing the abominable Errors, and detestable Idolatries, of the *Romish Church*.

WHEN it pleased God to set the Reformation on Foot, by *Wickliff* in *England*, *Huss* and *Hierom of Prague*; How did the Devil rage? What Troubles did he bring upon those, who embarked in this glorious Cause? But it being of God, it prospered in spite of all Opposition; and since the Establishment of the Reformed Religion

here, What numerous Methods have been taken to reduce *England*, the Bulwark of the Protestant Interest, under the *Roman Yoke*?

THIS has been often attempted by open Violence, secret Intrigues, and devilish Projects: The cruel *Papists* designed to have given a fatal Blow to the Protestant Cause in *England*, by taking off the King, Lords and Commons, at once: If they had succeeded herein, What Rapine, and barbarous Murders, would have immediately followed throughout the Kingdom? But kind Providence discovered the execrable Plot, at the very Time, when it was to be executed (which was on this Day) to the great Confusion of its Authors, and the inexpressible Joy of the Nation: A memorable Deliverance indeed! which ought never to be forgot by all true Lovers of Religion and Liberty.

IN many other Instances since, God has eminently appeared for us. In King *James* the Second's Reign, a Scheme was laid to enslave the Nation, to introduce Popery and arbitrary Power; but the Design of the Church's Enemies was, at that Time, also miraculously frustrated by the Prince of ORANGE coming over, and ascending the abdicated Throne.

As this Prince was a Hero in the Field, so on the Seat of Government, he was remarkably mild and gentle, always steady in his Principles of Religion, and to the Cause of Liberty.

THROUGH the whole of his Reign, he discovered a fervent Zeal for securing the Protestant Interest; and in nothing did he give a clearer Proof thereof, than fettling the Crown on the illustrious House of *Hanover*: A Family, which he was persuaded would pursue the same generous and noble Designs, that he had in View; nor was he mistaken in his Opinion, as is evident, since the Accession of that House to the Throne. But let us not forget what Measures were taken in a late Reign to deprive us of the happy Prospect of so just and mild a Government; and how seasonably God disappointed the Designs of our Enemies, in making way for *GEORGE* the First of glorious Memory, to ascend the *British Throne*, *To which he had an indisputable Right*.

GOD grant that the same Principles which he always stood firm to may fill the Breasts of all the Branches of his noble Family, and that they may continue to wear the *English Crown* to the latest Posternity: *Some useful Observations may be deduced from these Things.*

1. THAT the Christian and Reformed Religion are true, or of God, what less than divine Power could have propagated the Christian Faith in the first Ages of the Church, when the whole World was let against it, and resolved to overthrow it; especially as a few ignorant

and illiterate Men were employed to spread it: And yet, *the Word of the Lord had free Course, and was glorified* (2 Thessalonians 3:2.). It obtained Conquests over almost all the Nations in the World, but not by *humane Force*, for of that it was destitute; as it is really *very foreign from its Nature*: And pretty much the same may be observed of the Reformed Religion. The Persons engaged in the Reformation were very few; their Enemies numerous and potent, who made the most fierce and cruel Oppositions against it: Nevertheless, it gained surprising Advances in a very short Time, which evidently discovers it to be the Cause of God.

**2. THE** great Folly of those, who leek the Ruin of the Church, one would imagine, that as they have often been defeated in their Designs against her, and in such a Manner, as plainly demonstrates that God is resolved upon her Defence.

THEY might easily collect, that it is in vain to attempt her Subversion; and that the Consequence will certainly be fatal to themselves.

THAT the Church hath sufficient Incouragement in the greatest Dangers to depend upon the Protection of Providence, *God is in the Midst of her, she shall not be moved, God shall help her, and that right early* (Psalm 46:5.). That the Lord will be the Security of his People may be concluded from these Things:

(1) HIS Value for them above all others, the Church is most nearly interested in his Favour, he treats all others with Neglect in Comparison of her: When Nations, or Kingdoms, stand in the Way of his gracious Purposes concerning his Saints, he gives them over to Ruin and Destruction; hence he thus lays unto the Church, *I gave Egypt for thy Ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee, I will give Men for thee, and People for thy Life* (Isaiah 43:3, 4.).

THERE are none in the World of which he makes any Account but his Children; and therefore he expresses himself after this Manner, *What have I here, that my People is taken away for nought* (Isaiah 52:5.). This Language clearly intimates, that all others are as nothing in his Esteem; his tender Concern for the Church he lets forth in the most moving Way in these Words, He *that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of mine Eye* (Zechariah 2:8.).

THAT is, as a Man is industriously concerned to defend that valuable and useful Member from Injury; so I am thoroughly engaged in your Welfare and Safety from that infinite Love and Value I have for you.

(2.) HE has promised it, and his Word may be depended on; the holy Scriptures abound with Promises of this Kind. The Church may

expect perpetual Protection from God, as we learn by those Words of his, *Sing ye unto her, a Vineyard of red Wine, I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every Moment; left any hurt it, I will keep it Night and Day* (Isaiah 23:3.). The sacred Oracles declare, that the *Saints shall dwell on high; and that the Place of their Defence shall be in the Munitions of Rocks.*

The Church though a small, is yet a *strong City, because God will appoint Salvation for Walls and Bullwarks:* Now the gracious Promises of God may be fully relied on; for *he is in one Mind, and who can turn him? And what his Soul desireth, even that he doth: God is not a Man, that he should lye; neither the Son of Man, that he should repent: Hath said it, and shall he not do it? Or, Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good* (Job 23:13; Numbers 23:19.).

(3.) His own Glory is nearly interested in this Matter: The Welfare of the Church is interwoven with the Honour of her God; his Name is publickly professed by her, his Word is precious to her, and in his Institutions the delights: Her several Members are called *Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified* (Isaiah 56:3.). The Lord allures us that they *are a People formed for himself, and that they shall shew forth his Praise.* The Church is the proper Seat of divine Glory on Earth; hence the Apostle hath these Words, *To him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages, World without end, Amen* (Ephesians 2:21.): Therefore a Regard in God to his own Honour will influence him to protect the Saints.

(4.) He will destroy those who seek the Ruin of his Church, none can afflict the Saints without the greatest Injury to themselves; since God is as tender of them, as a Man is of the Apple of his Eye: The Church is *a burdensome Stone, and all that burden themselves with her shall be cut in Pieces, though all the People in the Earth be gathered together against her* (Zechariah 12:3.). God may for wise Reasons permit the Enemies of his People to harass and distress them, yea, he may use them as his Rod for the Correction of his Children; yet this will not excuse them from his most severe Resentment and Anger, which, I apprehend, to be the Import of these Words, *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion with a great jealousy; and I am very sore displeased with the Heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the Affliction.* To the Saints the Lord is *a Wall for their Security, and round about them*, so that they are not any way open to Invasion: As he is *a Wall of Fire*, it is most certain that he will consume and burn up those who attempt the Destruction

of his Church, the City about which he is a Wall of Protection and Defence.

However. formidable her Enemies may be, and though they may imagine that it is an easy Thing to devour her, because she is weak and defenceless in her self, as was before observed; yet they will ever find it absolutely impossible, and will eternally sink under the intolerable Weight of divine Vengeance.

THEY are but as combustible Matter before devouring Flames, they are comparable to Briars and Thorns, not only on account of the Grief and Pain which they occasion to the Church; but also because they will be consumed in a Moment by the burning Wrath of a provoked God: For to them he will for ever be *a consuming Fire* (Hebrews 12:28.), without any Intermission or Allay.

I proceed to consider the second Branch of the Doctrine.

*Secondly, The Church derives all her Glory from God: And will be the Glory in the Midst of her.* These Words may be understood passively, or actively, as *Cornelius a Lapide* observes, though he prefers the latter Sense,

“This Glory may be taken in a two-fold Manner; first *passively*, i.e. in her I will be Glorious, that is, I will be glorified and reverenced with honourable Worship in Jerusalem: Thus several take it, as he tells us; secondly, and better *actively*; i.e. I will glorify Jerusalem, I will bring Glory to it”;

in this Light others understand it, as he informs us.

I SHALL consider it in both Senses, God as glorified in the Church by what he works in her; and by that which he enables her to do with a direct View to his Honour.

**1. God is greatly honoured in the Church by what he works in her.**  
And,

(1.) In the Conquests he makes upon the Hearts of rebellious Men.

BY his omnipotent Grace, he subdues the stubborn and perverse Will of Man, brings him to submit to Christ as King in *Zion*, or cheerfully to yield Obedience to him in that Capacity. It is true, the Language of every natural Person’s Heart is, *I will not have this Man to reign over me* (Luke 19:14.); but God conquers the inflexible Will of the Sinner, according to his Promise in the everlasting Covenant, *thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power* (Psalm 110:3.).

FROM this Work abundant Glory redounds to the Riches of God's Grace, as is most evident from these Words, *But God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by Grace ye are saved: That in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace in his Kindness towards us through Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:4, 5, 7.).

(2.) IN upholding of his Saints; they are insufficient of themselves to perform any Thing that is spiritual, their corrupt Part strongly inclines them to back-slide from God; hence the Lord says of them, *My People are bent to Back-sliding from me.* (Hosea 11:7.)

THEY are subject to many Temptations, and unable to resist the least; a great many Enticements to Evil frequently present to them, which entangle the Affections, and influence the Will: And therefore they cannot persevere in Holiness in their own Strength; but they shall be *kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation* (1 Peter 1:5.). In their Support and Preservation the Wisdom of God is display'd; for the greatest Enemies are over-come, Sin, Satan, and the World, by such as are impotent in themselves; and this is readily acknowledged to be all of free Grace by the Saints: Also the almighty Arm of God is most clearly discovered in enabling such weak and feeble Creatures to withstand and conquer potent, subtle, and unwearied Adversaries.

## **2. God is greatly glorified in the Church, by what he enables her to perform with a direct view to his honour.**

(1.) BY that Faith she exercises in him: The true Church is composed of Believers in Christ; the is a spiritual House made up of lively Stones, as faith the Apostle, *And ye also as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual House* (1 Peter 2:5.).

THAT is to say, they were Persons endued with supernatural Life, which is the proper Principle of all spiritual Acts: Those who are in a State of Unregeneracy are destitute of such a Principle of Grace; and therefore the Apostle observes to the *Ephesians*, that they once were dead in Sin, *and you hath he quickened who were dead in Trespasses and Sins* (Ephesians 2:1.). Life must necessarily precede Motion as a Cause doth its Effect; all Acts flow from Life; spiritual Acts proceed from spiritual Life; such an Act is resting on God's Promise, which is Faith: By the Exercise of that Grace God is highly honoured; hence it is said, that *Abraham staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief; but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God* (Romans 4:20.).

THIS is an excellent Grace, it abases the Creature, and ascribes the Whole of our Salvation, and of every Mercy to God, it adores his incomprehensible Wisdom, admires his infinite and immense Favour, extols his Power, and cheerfully submits to his sovereign and absolute Dominion in all Things.

(2.) THE holy Obedience of the Church advances the Glory of her God, she hath a tender Regard to his Honour, and desires a perfect Conformity to his most righteous Will.

SIN is the greatest Burden of the Saints, and it gives them, when it is prevalent in their Souls, inexpressible Disquietude; under divine Influence their Language is really this to their heavenly Father, *Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God, thy Spirit is good, lead me into the Land of Uprightness* (Psalm 143:10.). The Spring of their Obedience is not Selfish and carnal, but evangelical and spiritual; it is not performed with an Expectation of procuring Favours from God, but to acknowledge with a humble Gratitude his undemerited Regard and Love: This is a truly generous and noble Principle, which is formed in the Saints by the holy Ghost, and is cherished by all his Operations upon them.

(3.) GOD is honoured by Ascriptions of Glory to him; this will be the delightful Service of the Church in Heaven, without any Interruption; and it is a Work which the Saints begin on Earth, when they have a lively Sense of their own Unworthiness, or view the Impurity of their Hearts, and the Imperfections that attend all their Duties, when they have a Prospect of their aggravated Guilt: And behold how God's super-abounding Grace rises over their Mounts of Sin and Rebellion, that it has secured to them the most valuable Blessings, they are struck with Wonder, and cannot but give him the Glory thereof in such low and humble Expressions as these, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give Glory* (Psalm 115:1.) with the greatest Pleasure at such a Time they joyn with the Apostle in laying, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all Spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3.): Thus God is glorified in the Church.

**3. The Words may be understood actively, I will fill her with Glory:** The Church's Glory doth not consist the Multitude of her Members, a Christian Community may be large and numerous, and yet dishonourable; the Riches and Grandeur of her Members are not her Glory, nor are beautiful Edifices for the publick Exercise of religious Duties any Part of her Honour, neither doth it consist in a pompous and gay Mode of Worship; the Church may be truly Glorious, although all these Things are wanting: This must be granted if it be

allowed that the purest Church which ever was upon Earth might lay claim to true Honour, which was composed of Christ and his Apostles; indeed, where these are not, the far greater Part of Mankind imagine that the Glory of Religion doth not attend.

THE Church's Beauty is not discoverable by a carnal Eye, for it is spiritual and invisible, fine is truly Illustrious; but internally so, *The King's Daughter is all glorious within, her Cloathing is of wrought Gold* (Psalm 45:13.). Her outward Appearance is mean and despicable, yet she possesses inwardly the greatest Glory, upon which Account she thus speaks of her self, *I am black, but comely as the Tents of Kedar, as the Curtains of Solomon* (Canticles 1:5.); the outside of which were coarse and rough, but within they were very beautiful and rich: Her real Beauty and Lustre consists in these Things:

(1.) THE Purity of the Principles she embraces and defends. The Gospel is an excellent System of Doctrines, which are calculated for the Honour of God, and that center in the Glory of the Mediator; hence it is called Glorious, *according to the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God* (1 Timothy 1:11.). Now it is to the Advantage as well as Honour of the Saints to preserve the Gospel pure and free from the invented Schemes of Men: The Primitive Church is highly commended for a close Adherence to divine Truth; *and they continued stedfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers* (Acts 2:42.).

WHENEVER the Church becomes corrupt in her Opinion, she declines in her true Glory; and therefore let all the Saints, as the Apostle exhorts, *stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel* (Philippians 1:27.). Such as never discerned the Excellency, felt the Power, nor tasted the Sweetness of Christian Doctrines, may conceive that it is of little or no Moment, what Reception and Entertainment they meet with: But Persons enlightened by divine Grace discover an excelling Glory in them, and pay the strictest Regard to all the Branches of heavenly Truth: For they are sensible that the Doctrines of the free Grace of God are the Source of all their present Consolation, and the Sum of their future Hopes; therefore they cannot but esteem them more than all Things else; they know that *they are more to be desired than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; they are sweeter to them than the Honey, and the Honey-comb* (Psalm 19:10.) That which heightens the Glory of the Gospel-Revelation is, it contains the fuller Display of the divine Perfections, as they harmoniously agree in the Salvation of lost Man, through the Obedience, Crucifixion, and Death of Christ: If therefore it is to the Honour of the Church to receive and maintain a Set of Doctrines, wherein the Glory of God is

most nearly concerned, it must be allowed that it is her peculiar Glory to stand fast in the Truth.

(2.) HER Honour lies much in Strictness of Disciple. Christ the Head of the Church hath prescribed the belt of Rules to preserve Unity, Holiness of Life, and Uncorruptness of Opinion, among his Followers, which it is the Glory of every Christian Community strictly to observe.

A religious Society cannot countenance Persons of pernicious Principles and scandalous Lives, without Censure from Christ: Thus he reproves the Church at *Pargamos*, because some of her Members entertained erroneous Doctrines, and were guilty of evil Practices, *I have a few Things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a Stumbling-block before the Children of Israel, to eat Things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit Fornication; so thou hast also them that hold the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Thing I hate* (Revelation 2:14, 15.).

THE Enemies of Religion are very forward to improve every irregular Step of the Saints to the Disadvantage of those Truths which they profess, their sinful Actions they charge upon their Sentiments, and represent the Doctrines they embrace as licentious and loose, affirm that they have no good Influence upon the Hearts or Lives of Men; and therefore every particular Congregation of Christ is under an indespensable Obligation to eject all such, whose Conduct is not answerable to their Profession, in order to prevent open Reproach from the World.

(3.) ANOTHER Branch of her Glory is the Holiness of her Members. It is certainly her Honour to be conformable to her Lord, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners* (Hebrews 7:26.), free from all Blemish in Heart and Life; *he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth* (1 Peter 2:22.); he is the perfect Pattern whom she ought to follow: This he recommends to his People, laying, *learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart* (Matthew 11:29.); we are to imitate no others any farther than they tread in his Steps. The great Apostle proposes himself as an Example to the *Corinthians*, but with this Limitation, *Be ye Followers of me, even as I also am of Christ* 1 Corinthians 11:1.): Looseness and Immorality among Professors is a great Dishonour to the Christian Name; it causes the Gospel, and Ways of Christ, to be evil spoken of, as was before observed. On the contrary, a regular and holy Walk recommends Religion, and vindicates the Doctrine of Grace. from the false Aspersions which are thrown upon it by Opposers; and. is an evident Proof, that what is objected to it, as abating Mens Regard

to Holiness, is mere Calumny and Falshood; that it really influences such that have experienced its Power, to shun Vice, and practise Vertue: These were the happy Effects it produced in the Primitive Christians, as the Apostle affirms; *for the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and hath appeared to all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World* (Titus 2:11, 12.).

(4.) THE Church's Glory consists in Unity and Love. Jars and Contentions, Heats and Animosities among the Saints, weaken their Hands, and give an Opportunity to the Enemies of the Gospel to prejudice their common Interest; not that all Contention is unlawful, for it is a Duty incumbent upon us to contend for the Faith, we are expressly exhorted to it, *it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints* (Jude 1:3.); that is to say, for revealed Truth. When the Doctrine of Christ is opposed and Error is advanced, Providence calls upon his Servants to vindicate the one, and to expose the other, which ought to be done with Zeal and Fervour; but not with undue Heat, or personal Reflections on any: It very ill becomes those, who profess to have a Value for Revelation, to be luke-warm and indifferent about the Doctrines it contains, whatever may be the Opinion of the Generality concerning them. No Branch of sacred Truth ought to be sacrificed to Peace, although some may presume to pronounce it of little *Consequence* or *Weight*: If the latter is not to be maintained without giving up the former, Dissension is rather to be chosen: To purchase Peace at the Expence of Truth, is buying it at too dear a Rate; but where the Cause of Truth is not concerned, we are to *follow the Things that make for Peace, and the Things wherewith one may edify another* (Romans 4:19.); which is beautiful and excellent, as the Words of the Psalmist plainly intimate, *Behold, how good and how pleasant a Thing it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity; it is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments; as the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the Blessing, even Life for evermore.* (Psalm 133:1, 2, 3.)

(Lastly.) HER greatest Honour is the Enjoyment of the divine Presence. The Glory of the Christian Religion principally consists in the Influences of God upon his People, and in the Manifestations of his Love to them: The external Part, without these Blessings, is but like the Picture of a Man, In which, though there may be Likeness and Proportion, Life is wanting.

IT is only a dead and lifeless Form, without Nearness to, and Fellowship with God, the Object of our Worship; Communion with God, elevates our Souls, strengthens our Graces, and gives Vigour to all our religious Acts.

UPON a serious Reflection on the general Disposition of our Minds, and the usual Manner in which we perform the Exercises of Religion, whether in the Closet, and in the Family, or in the House of God; I fear we shall find that we have but too great Reason to confess, that the spiritual and experimental Part of Religion is very much loft amongst us. Is there not in us an in-difference to Duty? Are we not dull, heavy, and wandering from God in the Discharge of it? But little of powerful Godliness is seen, or felt, by us; and therefore our Glory is greatly eclipsed: There is just Occasion for us to say, *How is the Gold become dim? How is the most fine Gold changed? The Stones of the Sanctuary are poured out in the Top of every Street; the precious Sons of Zion, comparable to fine Gold, how are they esteemed as earthen Pitchers, the Work of the Hands of the Potter* (Lamentations 4:1, 2.). May the happy Time be hastened, when the Church shall be *a Crown of Glory in the Hand of the Lord, and a royal Diadem in the Hand of her God* (Isaiah 62:3.). When he will say to Zion, *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*

## SERMON 4

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:55-57

“O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God which giveith us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## THE BELIEVER’S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH

CONSIDERED IN A SERMON OCCASION'D BY THE  
DECEASE OF MR. HUGH LLOYD, WHO DEPARTED THIS  
LIFE FEB. 11, 1735

*Published at the REQUEST of some who heard it.*

*Mortuus Christus sed in morte mors Mortua, quia Vita Mortua  
occidit Mortem Plenitudo Vitae deglutivit Mortem: Absorpta est  
Mors in Christi Corpore. Mors non Vitam rapit, sed reformat.*

*Augustin. in Joan. Prudentius.*

THE Infinitely wise God, at whole Disposal all Persons are, has been pleased to take from this Society a Member of long Standing and Usefulness. This mournful Providence I am desired by his surviving Relatives to Improve; for which Purpose I have made choice of these Words.

IN this Chapter the Apostle largely treats of the Resurrection of the Dead, and fully proves it by many irrefragable Arguments. This Doctrine cannot be disputed whatever Difficulties may seem to attend it, without giving up the whole Christian Religion; *for if there be no Resurrection the Dead Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not risen then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith also is vain*; (1 Corinthians 15:13, 14.) says the Apostle. The Earth is but a refining Place to the Bodies of the Saints, they will be railed from thence with unspeakable Advantage, free from Corruption and Death, spiritual and glorious; and therefore there is sufficient Foundation for this holy Triumph of the Apostle over Death, that formidable Enemy, and the devouring Grave. 'Tis thought by Interpreters, that this is a Quotation of the Septuagint's Version of those Words in the Prophecy of Hosea; *O Death! I will be thy Plague; O Grave! I will be thy Destruction*; but with a small Variation which affects not the Sense. The Apostle makes use of a Metaphor, taken either from Spurs and Pricks by which Oxen are driven, or rather from the Stings of Wasps and the like Creatures; from which if you take the Sting they are the same, but are not able to hurt.<sup>fl</sup> Thus the Sting being taken from Death, it can do no Injury to Men. *In speaking to the words I shall endeavour to do these Things.*

**First,** SHEW that Sin is the Sting of Death.

**Secondly,** THAT the Law is the Strength of Sin.

**Thirdly,** THAT Sin, which is Death's Sting, is taken away.

**Fourthly,** DEMONSTRATE that the Saints Victory over Sin, Death and the Grave, is the free Gift of God.

**Fifthly,** THAT this Conquest is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Sixthly,** OBSERVE that we are under Obligation to praise God on this Account.

**First, I am to shew, That Sin is the Sting of Death.**

MAN consists of two Parts, Soul and Body, Spirit and Matter: These are widely different in their Nature. The Soul is immaterial, it is not made up of Parts, is invisible, not subject to Corruption and Mortality.

THE Body is indeed a most curious Frame, in the Formation of which the infinite Wisdom of God is wonderfully discovered; but its Original is Dust, and to that it naturally tends, as appears from God's Threatning to our first Parents after the Fall; *Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return* (Genesis 3:19.). In Man these two Parts, tho' so very distant in their Nature, are most nearly united, the Dissolution of which Union is natural Death; 'tis of that the Apostle here speaks.

SIN is any Want of Conformity to, or Transgression of the Law of God, is evident from the Apostle's Account of it; *whosoever sinneth transgresseth also the Law, for Sin is the Transgression of the Law* (1 John 3:4.). It was Sin that subjected the human Nature to Mortality and Death; for *by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and so Death passed upon all Men*, ἐπ ὡ, in whom all have sinned (Romans 5:12.).

THE Bands and Ligaments which keep the Soul and Body together would never have been dissolved, if Sin had not rent them asunder; that is the meritorious Cause of Death. Hence, says the Apostle, *the Wages of Sin is Death* (Romans 6:23.); it is the Sting of it also, Death receives all its Poison and Venom from this evil Root; that is it which arms it with Terror and renders it formidable; when Death approaches, and Guilt attends it, what inexpressible Horror and Anguish doth it raise in the Minds of Men! Which Disquietude is but the small Beginning, of an eternal Spring of Sorrow and Distress. *That Sin is the Sting of Death thus appears.*

**1. IT** is that which makes Death a Curse: In it self it is not so, when it is inflicted with relation to Guilt contracted, as the proper procuring Cause thereof, it is a penal Evil, and a dreadful Curse; but without respect to Sin imputed, it has nothing really injurious in it. Our Lord, in his Crucifixion and Death, was made a Curse, as the Apostle asserts; *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us*(Galatians 3:13.). But then this was as he stood in the Sinners Place, and bore the Guilt of his People. The Saints are not exempted from the Stroke of that Enemy: *What Man is he that liveth and shall not see Death? Shall he deliver his Soul from the Hand of the Grave* (Psalm 89:48.)? notwithstanding they are secure from Curse, to them it is not a Token of divine Vengeance and Wrath, *all things are theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things, present, or things to come, all are theirs, for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's* (1 Corinthians 3:21, 22, 23.); it is to them an unspeakable Advantage and glorious Privilege.

**2.** SIN deprives Men of Happiness after Death is executed upon them, It Is that which secludes them from the Presence of God, the Company of blessed Angels and glorified Saints; this is the Bar which eternally keeps the Gates of Heaven shut against them, and for ever prevents their

Admission into that Place of perfect and everlasting Bliss, which Christ himself plainly teaches us; *many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out Devils? and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work Iniquity*(Matthew 7:22, 23.).

**3.** THIS is the Weight that sinks them into Hell, that Place of inconceiveable Horror and Torment, *where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched* (Mark 9: 44.). It is Sin that causes God to sentence Men to those Regions of Blackness and Despair in which *there will be wailing and gnashing of Teeth* (Matthew 13:42.). And that it is which will for ever hinder their Release from thence.

**4.** SIN draws down upon them the Vengeance of God. All Threatnings of divine Displeasure immediately refer to the commission of Sin; 'tis that which incurs the Anger of God, and for that only is his Fury poured forth upon any of his Creatures; *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance; but it will be solely on such that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Distraction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power* (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8, 9.). The Apostle, after the mention of various Sins, acquaints us, that *for those things sake the Wrath of God cometh on the Children of disobedience*. (Colossians 3:6.) There is an awful Cup of Anger in God's Hand for Sinners, but it is of their own filling up; *they treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath* (Romans 2:5.). It is the Guilt that Men contract, which exposes them to the fierce Resentments of an angry God. And therefore, What a dreadful Sting is Sin? which is attended with such Consequences.

### **Secondly, The Strength of Sin is the Law,**

which, as I conceive, includes in it all those Duties that God hath in joined upon us in his Word; every Branch of Holiness is referable to the Law, and comes within the Compass of it. The Law is to be considered either as it is in the Hand of God, thus it is a Covenant of Works, and has a Curse annexed to the Breach of it; or as it is in the Hand of the Mediator, thus it is not a Covenant of Works, but a Rule of Obedience; in which Sense the Saints are under it, *being, not*

*without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ* (1 Corinthians 9:21.). It is in the former View that we are to take it here, *the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just, and good* (Romans 7:12.); and therefore it doth not encourage Evil, or communicate Vigour and Strength to the Lusts of Men; yet in some Sense it is the Strength of Sin.

**1.** IT is an Occasion to it: The Heart of Man is full of impure and unlawful Desires, these are strictly forbid and restrained by the Law; but Concupiscence in Men is like to a Torrent of Water, that rises and swells till it bears away all Opposition which is made to its Flow; or the Fire, which grows the more vehement when it is pent up by the cold ambient Air. Thus the Law is an accidental Cause or Occasion of Sin; but not properly, for it is wholly repugnant to all Evil; in this Sense some think, it may be call'd the Strength of Sin. *Parcus* observes, that "Sin is irritated by the Law, and becomes the more sinful; the Fault is not the Law's, which forbids, reproves, and condemns Sin; but it is the Fault of our vicious Nature, which with the greater Violence is carried after that that is forbid, as an unruly Horse leapeth, and is the more head-strong in that he is the more held in by sharp Bits.<sup>12</sup>."

**2.** THE condemnatory Power of Sin is lodged in the Law: Hence every Sin subjects us to its Curse; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book off the Law to do them* (Galatians 3:10). This condemning Power of Sin is universal, it is extended to all Men without Exception, considered in themselves; Persons of every Rank are obnoxious to it, the Great and Noble as well as the Mean and Low, the Rich no less than the Poor. This Power of Sin to condemn is not to be disputed, for it is supported by the Authority of God the supreme Judge, it is his awful Voice that pronounces the Curse, nor is it a Power that is unjustly exercised; *it is a righteous thing with God to recompense Tribulation* (2 Thessalonians 1:6.), to such as sin against him. The Condemnation of a Sinner is equitable, because he acts in direct Opposition to the revealed Will of God; no Exemption can possibly be obtained from it but by the free Grace of God through Christ, which the Psalmist strongly expresses; *none can by any Means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ransom for him; for the Redemption of their Soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever* (Psalm 49:5, 6.).

SOME useful Observations may be drawn from hence.

**1.** THAT it is impossible to attain Happiness by the Works of the Law: There is not any Law given which cloth not furnish Sin with a Curse; all Men are corrupt, and unable perfectly to obey divine

Precepts, and of Consequence none can be justified by the Law. It is certain that that Law which condemns Sin, will never justify a Sinner, as so considered; but all Persons are sinful, and *therefore by the Deeds of the Law* (no>mou, a Law without the Particle, *i.e.* any divine Law whatever) *there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin* (Romans 6:20.).

**2.** THE Law cannot subdue and conquer Sin, it justly condemns every Sin, but its Office is not to subdue it; the Grace of God alone can do this. So long as a Man is under the Law as a Covenant of Works, Sin retains its Tyranny and Dominion in the Heart; it is not the most dreadful Denunciation of Wrath against Evil, that will influence a Sinner to hate it; nothing less than a Discovery of free and sovereign Grace, which is gloriously displayed in the Pardon of Sin through Christ, can produce an Abhorrence of it: Hence, says the Apostle, *Sin shall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace* (Romans 6:14.).

**3.** THE Law is of Service to convince us of Sin, and inform us of its Consequences: To this End the Spirit of God makes Use of it, he impresses its Precepts upon the Mind, and presents its Threats to the View of a Sinner, to acquaint him with his Sinfulness and Misery upon which he dies. This Effect it produced in the Apostle, as he declares; *I was alive without the Law once, but when the Commandment came Sin revived and I died* (Romans 7:9.). Its Nature is to wound but not to heal; the Curses of it are as so many Arrows fixed in the Heart of a Sinner, which deeply pierce it, nor can any thing heal it but the *Name of Christ, which is as Ointment poured forth* (Song of Solomon 1:3.) .

**Thirdly, The Sting of Death is taken from it:** O Death, where is thy Sting? this Mode of Expression strongly implies, that it is taken away. Here I shall observe,

**1.** The Person by whom it is removed, and that is Christ: It was predicted of him, that *he should finish Transgression, and make an end of Sin* (Daniel 9:24.). Agreeable to which Old Testament-Prediction, the Gospel assures us, that *he has by himself purged away our Sins* (Hebrews 1:3.). John the Baptist with Wonder beheld and spake of him as *the Lamb of God, that took away the Sin of the World* (John 1:29.). Sin was such a Burden that none but himself could stand under, it would have sunk any mere Creature into eternal Ruin; if all created Power had centred in one Subject, yet this Man, or Angel, furnished with all this Strength, would have been infinitely unequal to that Load of Guilt which Christ bore.

**2.** ALL Sin is taken away, no part of Death's Sting is left remaining: The whole Guilt which the Elect of God contract was imputed to

Christ; *all we, like Sheep, bare gone affray, we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all* (Isaiah 3:6.); and therefore they are entirely acquitted by divine Justice, no Charge can be justly exhibited against them, and if any is, it will prove invalid, as is most evident from that bold Challenge of the Apostle; *Who shall say any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies, Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again* (Romans 8:33, 34.). Numerous Offences they commit against God, their Number vastly exceeds their Observation, and yet they are conscious of so large a Multitude, that at some times they very much hesitate concerning the Remission of them; but they are perfectly cleansed from all their Stains and Spots, by Christ's Blood, for *the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them from all Sin* (1 John 1:7.); none is to be found upon them as Persons justified, so considered, they are as clear from Guilt as if they had never contracted any, which is very manifest from these Words; *In those Days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the Iniquity of Israel Shall be fought for, and there shall be none; and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve* (Jeremiah 1:20.). All their Crimes are carried at the greater Distance from their Persons; hence are those Words of the Church; *as far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our Transgressions from us* (Psalm 103:12.).

3. SIN is taken out of God's Sight; it must be allowed in some Sense, that God sees no Sin in his People, since it is plainly declared in the divine Word; *be bath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel* (Numbers 23:21.). This is not inconsistent with his Omniscience, for we do not assert that the Sins of God's People are hid from the Eye of his Knowledge; he is certainly acquainted with every Transgression that any of his commit, and hates Evil in them no less than in others; but it is the Eye of his Justice that is intended, which beholds them as *all fair and without Spot* (Song of Solomon 4:7.), as washed in Christ's Blood, and clothed with his most perfect Righteousness.

I AM tempted to think, that some who have objected to the Removal of all Sin out of God's Sight, must have wilfully mistaken the Intention of such as affirm and vindicate it, with an ungenerous Design to calumniate and traduce them, because it is expressly asserted in the holy Scriptures, and doubtless is inseparable from a perfect Justification of the Saints, through Christ.

#### **Fourthly, GOD gives his People Victory over Sin, Death, and the Grave.**

Here I shall consider,

**1st**, The Conquest they have over these Enemies;

**2dly**, Observe, That it is the Gift of God.

**1st.** THE Saints are Conquerors over all their Adversaries, as the Apostle most clearly teaches us in those exulting Words of his; *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword: (As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the Day long, we are accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter:) Nay, in all these things we are more than Conquerors through him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:35, 36, 37, 38, 39.)

**1.** BELIEVERS are Victors over Sin, the most formidable Adversary of their Souls; this bore the Sway in their Hearts, before Conversion it exercised Rule and Dominion over them; it subjected them to the Maledictions the Law, and exposed them to the Anger of God, as in themselves; that is it which rendered them deferring of eternal Death: But this cruel Enemy is conquered, condemned and destroyed.

**(1.)** THEY are Conquerors over Sin as a usurping Tyrant, its destructive Reign in their Hearts is taken away by omnipotent Grace, the Spirit of God dethrones it in Regeneration; it is true, the Being of it is continued in Believers, till Death; but it is deprived of its reigning Power, for Grace reigns in the Soul in Opposition to Sin; that *as Sin hath reigned unto Death, even so might Grace reign through Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord; nor will it ever regain that Power which before it possessed, how violently soever it may rage and swell; so long as the Saints are under Grace they are secure from the Reign of Sin, which is the evident Import of these Words; Sin Shall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law but under Grace* (Romans 6:14.).

**(2.)** THEY are above the Reach of its condemning Power: Hence, says the Apostle, *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; from this they are redeemed by Christ's Blood, and until that loses its Virtue, or becomes of little Worth in God's Account, the Saints shall be secured from all Condemnation and Curse; which it never will do: Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us* (Galatians 3:13.).

**(3.)** THEY are raised above all Danger of lying under the Consequences of Sin after Death; something of which you have

heard Since Sin it self is expiated there is no ground to fear its fatal Effects for Justification from it secures from all the penal Evils that attend it; as appears by these Words, *being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him* (Romans 5:10.). Divine Anger is not poured down upon any but for Sin, those therefore to whom it is not imputed, have an eternal Security from God's Displeasure.

**2.** THE Saints have Victory over Death by Christ; they are not exempted from its Stroke, but must submit unto it. Persons of the greatest Usefulness in the Church, when they have done their Generation-Work, must lie down in the silent Dust; *our Fathers, where are they, and the Prophets, do they live for ever* (Zechariah.) But, blessed be God, Death hath lost its Terror, 'tis deprived of its Sting, it cannot draw after it any hurtful Consequences, which when the Believer views by Faith, he is not terrified at its nearest Approach; no melancholy Apprehensions arise in his Mind, nor would he have this Enemy slacken its Pace, and delay to give the fatal Blow. Thus doth he bespeak this King of Terrors: I am sensible 'tis in vain to think of withstanding thy Arrest, I am certain that my Soul must be rent asunder from my Body, and enter into an unknown World, and that my fleshly Tabernacle must be dissolved and crumbled into Dust; the Thought of which strikes me with no manner of Dread, for I am comfortably persuaded, that I shall only die to eternally live in the immediate Presence of my heavenly Father and gracious Redeemer, which is a Happiness that infinitely exceeds my most extended Ideas; and that my Body shall certainly be delivered from thy Power, be railed immortal, and never feel the Weight of thy cold Hand any more. I therefore welcome thee as my Friend, and wish not thy Departure: The chillness of my Blood, the lowness of my Pulse, and dimness of my Eyes, are not in the least disagreeable to me. He looks upon this Enemy Death with a pleasant Countenance, and joyfully receives it with open Arms. To see a Believer thus depart, is, in my Opinion, the most glorious Prospect that can be beheld on this side Eternity.

**3.** The People of God are Conquerors over the Grave; the Earth Is to be a Receptacle for the Bodies of the Saints till the Time of the Resurrection. Hence *Job* says, *I know that thou wilt bring me to Death, and to the House appointed for all living* (Job 30:23.). But they shall be raised from thence by the almighty Power of God; their Dust is securely kept by the watchful Eye of God upon it, he will collect its scattered Particles, and frame their Bodies spiritual and immortal, make them capable of eternal Duration; the Lord will change this vile Body that it may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able even to

*subdue all Things to himself* (Philippians 3:21.). Then will Death be swallowed up in Victory. Thus it appears that the Saints are Conquerors over all their spiritual Adversaries, and have sufficient Reason to triumph in the View of Death.

**2dly,** THIS Victory is not obtained by them, but it is the free Gift of God; which is very evident from these Things.

**1.** GOD'S Will to remit Sin is voluntary, free, and sovereign; it was not influenced by any external Motive, his Determination to forgive the Offences of his People arises wholly from his good Pleasure, nothing in them Induces him to it; neither is the divine Will moved to this gracious Act by Christ's Death. God did not first will that his Son should die, and then resolve to pardon Sin; but, or, the contrary, he first determined not to impute Sin to his Elect, and then fixed upon the Death of Christ as the only Way in which the Honour of his Law, and the Glory of his Justice might be secured in their Discharge; divine Favour is not the Effect, but the Cause of Christ's Suffering for us, as he himself hath taught us; *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life* (John 3:16.).

**2.** It was infinite Love that gave Christ for us, our Forgiveness is the Purchase of a Redeemer's Blood; taken in that View it is an Act of Justice; *whom God hath let forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time his Righteousness:*

*That he might be just, i.e. appear to be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus* (Romans 3:25, 26.). It is also an Act of free, rich, and glorious Grace, the Price that is paid for our Redemption is so far from being incompatible with the Freeness of it, that it is a greater Illustration thereof than if we had been pardoned without any Satisfaction by a Surety, because free Love provided the Sponsor, and paid the Debt for us. It as a Commendation of divine Goodness towards us, *in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8.). To us our Salvation is altogether as free as if both Law and Justice had been wholly neglected in the Affair. In Christ we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of God's Grace (Ephesians 1:7.).

**3.** GOD justifies us in a Way of free Grace; *being justified by his Grace, we are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life* (Titus 3:7.), the Righteousness of Christ is our Title to everlasting Life, 'tis that only can secure us from the second Death. This is the free Gift of God to us, and is an Instance of infinite Love; *God justifies us freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in*

**4.** HEAVEN and eternal Glory is his gracious Donation; we are wholly unable to do anything which may procure us a Right to future Happiness, if we shall be kept from Heaven till we recommend our Persons to the divine Regard by the Observance of the Law, we shall never come there. The Crown of Glory designed for the Saints is not won by them, but freely given to them. As *Death is the Wages of Sin so eternal Life is the Gift*, χάρισμα, the free Gift of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ Romans 6:23.), the Saints will live and reign with him for ever, as Conquerors over Sin, Death, and the Grave; but not by Virtue of what they have done: All their Felicity springs merely from undermerited Goodness. Hence are those Words of our Lord, *Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom* (Luke 12:32.)

**Fifthly, We have this Conquest through Christ. He only fought our Battle, and slew our Enemies.** As this Victory is a free Gift of immense Favour, it is the Purchase of Blood, the way in which Christ obtained it is really surprizing.

**1.** He took Sin upon him; all the Sins of all the Elect of God were amassed together, and laid upon him, *all we like Sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all* (Isaiah 53:6.). In himself he was pure and innocent, free from any Stain or Pollution; *he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth* (1 Peter 2:22.); that of all things was most hateful to him, and yet, in order to condemn, conquer, and destroy it, he must bear it. This was a Weight which would have sunk an Angel into the lower Hell, Christ alone could stand under, and carry it into an eternal Oblivion.

**2.** In him Sin was condemned, *for what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the Flesh, God sending his own Son in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the Flesh* (Romans 8:3.). The whole Curse demerited by it, was inflicted on it in the Believers Surety; the fierce Threatnings of the Law are pardoned, not in vain though Sinners are pardoned, for they were all poured down upon Christ, as bearing the Guilt of his People. Oh! amazing indeed! that the most holy and blessed Person, he from whom all Blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal flow, should be made Sin and a Curse.

**3.** HE bore the Wrath of God against Sin; What a Cup of Anger must the Sins of the Elect fill up! This was put into Christ's Hand by his Father, he readily received it, and freely drank it. God acted towards Christ as one chargeable with Guilt, having his People's upon him; Sin could not be imputed to him without his undergoing the whole Penalty demerited by it: As God did not withhold his Son from

suffering for the Guilty, he did not make him any Abatement of what Law or Justice might have demanded of the Persons in whose Place and Room he stood; *he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all* (Romans 8:32.). The Father withdrew from him when on the Cross, which caused him to say, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me* (Psalm 22:1.)? The thick Cloud of our Sins interposed between God and Christ, and hid his smiling Countenance from him; God smote and wounded him with the Sword of Sin-avenging Justice; *awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, smite the Shepherd* (Zechariah 8:7.), was the awful Language of God. Christ suffered from the Hands of Men and Devils, but infinitely more from the Hand of his Father; *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to Grief* (Isaiah 53:10.); his inconceivable Wrath flowed into the Soul of Christ, and most deeply affected him.

**4.** HE submitted to Death, the painful and ignominious Death of the Cross: Hence the Apostle speaks of it in this emphatical manner, *be became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross*. Sin subjected us to Death, according to the Law, and therefore it was necessary that Christ, in making Satisfaction for our Offences, should suffer this Part of the Penalty due thereto.

**5.** CHRIST was laid in the Grave, his Body was committed to the Ground; *he made his Grace with the Wicked, and with the Rich, in his Death* (Isaiah 53:9.); but it was preserved from Corruption there; *his Soul was not left in Hell, nor did this Holy One see Corruption* (Psalm 16:10.). He who had a proper Right to Heaven, was for a time shut up in the dark Confines of the Earth, and encompassed with Dust. 'Tis true, it was not for a long Continuance, because it was impossible he should be retained under the Power of Death.

WE have taken a short View of Christ in his *Sufferings*, or as submitting to the Enemies which he undertook to conquer. Let us now behold him in his *Triumph* over them all.

**1st.** HE rose from the dead as a compleat Victory over Sin, Death, and the Grave. By dying he was the Death of Sin, and overcame Satan that had the executive Power of it; had he not fully satisfied for the Sins of his People, he would have been held by the Bands of Death; but God being perfectly reconciled, and having no farther Demand to make, dispatched a Messenger of Justice from Heaven to honourably set free the imprisoned Body of Jesus: A shining Seraph descends at the Command of God, and rolls away the Stone from the Mouth of the Sepulchre in which our Lord was interred (Matthew 28:2.). An evident Proof was this, that he had finished our Redemption. As the Battle he sought was none of his own, but his

People's, the Victory he has gained is theirs; they were considered in him in his triumphant Resurrection from the Dead, *they were raised up together* (Ephesians 2:6.), and are as secure from a Charge of Sin and everlasting Death as Christ himself is, who as he is raised from the Dead, dieth no more, Death *hath no more Dominion over him* (Romans 6:9.). And because he lives, the Saints shall live also.

**2ndly.** HE is ascended in Triumph to Heaven, *having spoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a Shew of them openly, and triumphed over them* (1 Corinthians 2:25). Satan and all the infernal Spirits were led captive by him in his Ascension to Glory, *thou hast led Captivity captive*, and this as the Representative of his People. So that they may be assured of a perfect Deliverance from Sin, and that Satan cannot destroy them; *as a roaring Lion he walketh about seeking whom he may devours* (1 Peter 5:8.); but we may depend upon it, that he will never be permitted to devour those on whose Account Christ engaged with, and conquered him.

**3rdly,** CHRIST sits at the Right Hand of God: *When he had by himself purged away our Sins, he for ever sat down at the Right Hand of the Majesty on high* (Hebrews 1:3.). The Father thus glorified the Son upon his compleating the Work that he undertook. And this Honor is conferred upon him as the Head of his Saints, for *they are raised up together, and made to fit together in heavenly Places, in Christ* (Ephesians 2:6.). He is gone to Heaven as their *Forerunner*, and they shall as certainly follow him as they are now let down in him; 'tis his Will that they should, nor can the Father in Justice deny it; *Father, I will that they also when thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me for thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World* (John 17:24.). Thus it is evident, that the Believers Conquest over Sin, Death, and the Grave, was obtained by Jesus Christ.

**Sixthly,** *We are under the greatest Obligation to praise God for this Victory which may include these things.*

**1.** AN hearty Acknowledgment that we were utterly unable to conquer these our potent Enemies. It was absolutely out of our Power to defend our selves from the fatal Consequences of Sin, that would have involved us into the blackest Horror and Despair, and have drew down upon us the infinite Anger of God. Nor were we capable to withstand and conquer Death, that terrible Adversary, unless we are sensible of our Inability to succour our selves, the Victory we enjoy will not be properly valued by us, we shall not ascribe that Glory to God for it, which it demands at our Hand.

**2.** THAT we were as unworthy of God's giving us this Victory, as we are unable to obtain for our selves we deserve nothing but Wrath from God, because our Hearts are impure, full of Sin and Enmity to him; our Conduct is disagreeable to his Law, we have been guilty of many open and direct Breaches of it; in no Action are we perfectly conformable to it, *in many things we offend all* (James 3:2.). If therefore he should treat us according to our Demerit, we must eternally lie under his awful but righteous Vengeance.

**3.** TO admire and adore his free Love, which gives us this Victory. God is resolved upon the Honour of his Grace, he will not suffer its Glory to be lessened or eclipsed, his grand Design in saving Sinners, is to exalt it to the highest Pitch; it is *to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace* (Ephesians 1:5.). Nor will he ever raise a Soul to Heaven who will not readily allow it to be an Act of undemerited Goodness, all boasting is as effectually prevented in his People, as their Happiness is eternally secured.

**4.** TO readily allow that the Whole of this Victory is from God. The Design was formed by him in his everlasting Counsels, and the Method of gaining it is entirely his Contrivance; no Creature could ever have thought of the Way in which it is accomplished, his Power was exerted to effect it; all created Strength would have proved infinitely unequal to it. To imagine a Creature might contribute to it, Is a base Detraction from divine Honour.

**5.** TO live as those who have a true Sense of the Conquest obtained, which is to act to the Glory of God, who fared us when sinking into eternal Ruin, delivered us out of the Hands of our Enemies, and placed us far. above their Reach, we are certainly under *Obligation*, *whether we live to live lo the Lord, or whether we die to die to the Lord* (Romans 14:8.). This is the Judgment which we ought to form, that *if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them* (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.).

Lastly. SINCE Christ is the Person Who wrought this Victory for us, let him share in our Praises; Can the Saints refuse him this Honour? when they consider what a Load of Guilt he bore, and dolorous Sufferings he went through; that he was made Sin and a Curse, lay under his Father's Vengeance, and suffered Death for them; I say, Can they refuse him this Honor? Surely, no.

I beg leave to observe here, that the Person whose Death occasioned this Discourse, discovered a just Sense of his own Unworthiness, and Christ's great Goodness. In his last Affliction, a few Days before his Departure, he said to me, and a Friend who went with me to visit him, *That he had sometimes thought he could endure any Sufferings*

*for Christ, or Death it self; but that he found his Heart to be deceitful above all things. That under sharp Pains he could not forbear to complain, yet, says he, not of God, but to God. Under the exquisite Pain that attended him, as I am informed, many sweet Expressions dropt from him, such as these:*

*It is appointed for Men once to die, but what is Death, or the Sufferings of this Life, to the Torments of Hell, blessed be God, for Christ, I am delivered from.* At other Times he expressed himself thus: *What are the Afflictions that I bear, to the Sufferings of my dear Redeemer?* and declared the Steadiness of his Faith in God, as his God, to his Daughter, in these Words: *God has been a God and Father to me all my Days, and I am satisfied he will be a God and Father to you and yours.*

IT has been observed by some Friends among whom he used to exercise his Gift in Prayer, that of late *he has improved in Fervency, and Spirituality in that religious Duty.*

I MAKE no doubt but that as he is removed from the Church Militant on Earth, he is taken to the Church Triumphant in Heaven, and is now perpetually engaged in the Celebration of the Redeemer's Praise, with the rest of the Saints above who thus express their Gratitude to him for Redemption from Sin. *Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

## SERMON 5

### 1 TIMOTHY 3:8, 9.

“Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”

### A SERMON PREACHED AT AN ORDINATION OF DEACONS

MARCH 5, 1735.

I HUMBLY beg Leave of you, my Brethren, who have been at this Time solemnly called to, and invested with the Office of Deacons, to lay before you the Qualifications which are necessary for Persons in

that Capacity, the Work that is proper to it, and to offer some Things by way of Encouragement to you therein from these Words.

THE Apostle begins this Chapter with observing the Excellency of the Office of a Bishop, Pastor, or Overseer in a Church of Christ; and then gives the necessary Characters of such who are in that Function.

AFTER this he proceeds to mention the several Virtues requisite to Persons who serve the Church in the Station of Deacons, most of which are collected in the Words now to be considered.

*The Method I shall pursue, in my Discourse on this Subject, will be this:*

*First*, I SHALL observe the Notation of the Term *Deacon*, with the various Application of it.

*Secondly*, SHEW what gave Rise to this Office in the Church.

*Thirdly*, THE Qualifications of Officers.

*Fourthly*, THEIR proper Work.

*Fifthly*, Offer some Things for your Encouragement therein.

*First, I begin with the Notation of the Word, and the different Application of it:* Διάκονος, *Deacon*, signifies, a Minister; from the Verb διακονέω, to minister speedily. Which imports, that Persons in this Office should closely, and eagerly pursue the Duties of it; that they ought to minister to others, as with Clearfulness, so with Expedition.

It is a Title of Office, Service, or Administration, and is variously applied. ‘Tis given to Christ; *Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a Minister, Διάκονον, of the Circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the Promises made unto the Fathers* (Romans 15:8.). *He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* The Apostle gives this Name to Magistrates; *for Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil: Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same; for he is the Minister, Διάκονος, of God to thee for good* (Romans 13:4.). It is applied to Preachers of the Gospel; Who *then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers, Διάκονοι, by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every Man* (1 Corinthians 3:5.)? Every true Disciple and Worshipper of Christ hath this Title given to him; if *any Man serve me let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my Servant, Διάκονος, be: If any Man serve me, him will my Father honour* (John 12:26.).

The Apostle bestows this Character on *Phebe*; *I commend unto you Phebe our Sister, which is a Servant, Διόκονος, a Deaconess, of the Church which is at Cenchrea.* (Romans 16:1.). I am of Opinion, that there were Deaconesses in the primitive Churches, whose Business it was to visit the poor, afflicted, and aged Sisters, and to administer Relief to them; to acquaint the Church with their Necessities, and obtain Help for them. Persons chose to this Work were generally Widows, such who had been married, and behaved in that Station of Life with Chastity, Diligence, and Prudence, who are called *Widows indeed* (1 Timothy 5:3.). It was required that they should be Sixty Years of Age when appointed by the Church to attend on this Service; *let not a Widow be taken into the Number, under Threescore Years old, having been the Wife of one Man* (Ver. 9.). The excellent and learned ecclesiastical Historian Mr. *Bingham* speaking of them hath these Words: “There Is some mention made of them in Scripture, by which it appears, that their Office was as ancient as the apostolical Age; St. *Paul* calls *Phebe, a Servant of the Church at Cenchrea*, Romans 16:1. the original Word is Διόκονός, answerable to the Latin Word *Ministra*; which is the Name given them in *Pliny's Epistle*, which speaks about the Christians. *Tertullian* and some others, call them *Viduae*, Widows; and their Office, *Viduatus*; because they were commonly chosen out of the Widows of the Church. For the same Reason *Epiphanius*, and the Council of *Laodicea*, call them Η Πρεσβότιδα elderly Widows; because none but such were ordinarily taken into this Office<sup>fl</sup>”

Not but that Virgins were sometimes admitted to this Service, as he afterwards observes.

And Dr. *Cave* allows the same, whose Account of them is this:

“Their Original was very early, and of equal standing with the Infancy of the Church; such was *Phebe* in the Church at *Cenchrea*, mentioned by St. *Paul*; such were those two Servant-Maids spoken of by *Pliny* in his Letters to the Emperor, whom he examined upon the Rack; such was the famous *Olympias* in the Church of *Constantinople*, not to mention any more particular Instances. They were either Widows, and then not to be taken into the Service of the Church, under Threescore Years of Age, according to St. *Paul's* Direction, or else Virgins, who having been educated in order to it, and given Testimony of a chaste and sober Conversation, were set apart at Forty. What the proper Place and Ministry of these Deaconesses was in the ancient Church, though *Matthew Blasteres* seems to render a little doubtful, yet certainly it principally consisted in such Offices as these; to attend upon the Women at times of publick Worship, especially in the Administration of Baptism, that

when they were to be divested, in order to their *Immersion*, they might overshadow them, so as nothing of Indecency and Uncomeliness might appear; sometimes they were employed in instructing the more rude and ignorant sort of Women in the plain and easy Principles of Christianity, and in preparing them for Baptism; otherwhiles in visiting and attending upon Women that were sick, in conveying Messages, Counsels, Consultations, Relief (especially in Times of Persecution, when it was dangerous for the Officers of the Church) to the Martyrs, and them that were in Prison. And these Women, no doubt it was, that *Libanius* speaks of among the Christians, who were so very ready to be employed in these Offices of Humanity.<sup>f3</sup>"

To these Observations the Words of *Clemens Alexandrinus* agree; *We also know what Things Paul requires of Deaconesses in the first Epistle to Timothy*<sup>f4</sup>. It has been thought proper by some Congregations of late Years, to appoint faithful Women to such Service among them, as the Primitive Churches did; nor can I apprehend that any thing is justly to be excepted against that Practice, since it appears to be apostolical.

THIS Name is especially given to the Stewards of the Church-Treasure, and those who take care of the Poor; which is one considerable Branch of their Work.

***Secondly, That which gave Rise to these Officers in the Church, was the great Increase of the Disciples through the Apostles preaching.*** When the Number of Believers was small, the Apostles performed those good Offices which Persons in this Station are called to; but, upon a large Addition of Members to the Church, they were not able to attend on their Ministry, and continue to take care of the poor Saints. Now as they were peculiarly called to preach the Gospel, they judged it improper to engage in other Services, which would unavoidably interrupt them in that their special Business. And therefore they proposed to the Church, to choose Persons who might be thought suitable for that Trust.

AN Account of which we have in these Words: *And in those Days, when the Number of the Disciples was multiplied, there arose a Murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their Widows were neglected in the daily Ministrantion. Then the Twelve called the Multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said, It is not Reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve Tables. Wherefore, Brethren, look ye out among your selves Men of honest Report, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this Business. But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word*<sup>f5</sup>

*Thirdly, The Qualifications necessary to this Office are many and great.*

**I.** Gravity is required in such as serve the Church in this Capacity; *likewise must the Deacons be grave*. The original Word is σεμνός, which is sometimes translated, *honest*; as for Instance, *finally*, *Brethren*. *whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest*, σεμνὰ, *Philippians 4:8*. It is highly proper that Persons in this Office should be of *honest Report*, or Men of known Probity and strict Honour, because they are entrusted with the Church's Treasure, which ought to be faithfully expended in promoting those pious Views, for which it is contributed; no Part of it may lawfully be disposed of to serve other Purposes upon any Pretence whatever. And therefore, in the Choice of Men to this Trust, regard is to be had to their Integrity and inviolable Justice.

Farther, the Word is used for Sobriety and Chastity; *even so must their Wives be grave*, σεμνὰς (1 Timothy 3:11.); that is to say, sober, modest, and chaste. This is a very necessary Part of a Deacon's Character. Levity and Frothiness in Conversation is unbecoming all Professors of Religion, but especially such as are invested with Office-Power in a Church of Christ.

**II.** Freedom from Guile and Hypocrisy, which is intended by these Words, not *double tongued*, διλόγονς; the Word signifies one who, out of the same Mouth, breathes heat and cold<sup>16</sup>, that is, contrary things. The Apostle hereby condemns feigned Expressions of Respect; the Heart and the Tongue ought to perfectly agree in our Profession of Friendship to others; we are commanded to love in Reality, *love not in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth*. This apostolical Exhortation is too little regarded by many, who are at sometimes very liberal in their Declarations of Value and Esteem, for such with whom they maintain a Correspondence; and yet, by Methods as ungenerous, as they are sly and designing, detract from their real Worth, and sink their deferred Reputation among Men; which Practice is a Shame to the Christian Religion. Those who are in the Office of Deacons, ought to be free from this abominable Vice: It becomes them, to shew all Tokens of Tenderness and Compassion to the Distressed, and to be as diligent in their Endeavours to relieve them, as they are forward to declare their Sympathy with them under their Troubles; in Imitation of their great Lord and Master, in whom there was *no Guile*. Is it not an intolerable Imposition upon the Afflicted and Low, to raise their Expectations of Assistance, by fair Speeches, and, notwithstanding, heighten their Distress by a wilful Neglect of their Case?

**III.** Temperance is required in the Character of a Deacon; *not given to much Wine*. The moderate Use of any of the good Creatures of God, is allowable; Wine is as lawful to be drank as Water, provided it be not to excess. So much is implied in the Words of the Apostle; he doth not forbid drinking of Wine, but only a greedy and excessive Use of it: He advises *Timothy* to it, *drink no longer Water but a little Wine, for thy Stomach's sake, and thine often Infirmitie*s (1 Timothy 5:13.). Our Lord, who was a perfect Pattern in all Virtues, did not deny himself the Use of this, as may be collected from what the *Pharisees* maliciously objected to him; *the Son of Man is come eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous Man, and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners* (Luke 7:34.). Immoderate and excessive drinking is absolutely unlawful, it is a *leading Vice*, and generally draws after it many great Evils; besides that, it is a shameful Abuse of the Bounty of Providence, and of the Person himself who is guilty thereof; and therefore all Professors of Religion ought to carefully avoid it, but particularly such as are invested with any Office in the Church of Christ.

**IV.** Persons in this Capacity should be clear of Avarice, *not covetous*.

THE same Qualification is necessary to a Bishop: The Apostle gives it as a Part of his Character, μὴ ἀχροκερδή (1 Timothy 5:3.), the same Word as is here used *not greedy of filthy Lucre*. It Is very requisite that Persons in this Function should not be of an avaritious Disposition; because that might prove a strong Temptation to them to desert their Service in the Church, it being seldom in their Power to provide for themselves and Families in such a manner as Men of Trade and secular Business are able to do; and they perhaps, not less capable of it, if they thought proper to devote themselves to it. A free and generous Temper is required in a Deacon, no less than in an Elder, for which there are special Reasons: These Officers are to receive the Collections of the Church, and dispose of them to those Ends for which they are made; therefore it is proper that they should excite the Members to true Generosity, by a liberal Contribution according to their Ability; for it is well known, that *Example* has a far greater Influence upon Men than *Precept*: Besides this, if they are backward in communicating of their Substance to pious Uses, it must be a Check upon them when called to stir up others to Works of Charity and Beneficence; and an exorbitant love of Money, may tempt them to act an unfaithful Part, in their Distributions of the Church's Treasure. From whence it is easy to collect, that covetous Persons are wholly unfit for this Office; and, that a Community is guilty of the greater Imprudence in the Choice of those who be so.

**V.** They ought to be such Persons as govern their Families well; *let the Deacons be the Husbands of one Wife, ruling their Children and their own Houses well* (1 Timothy 3:12.). In order to which, it is needful that they behave with Prudence, Sobriety and Caution, to be exemplary in real Virtue and Religion. It is the Duty of all Parents and Masters of Families, to instruct their Children and Servants in what manner to demean them selves, to sharply reprove them for Sin, and to cherish all Appearance of Concern about the eternal Welfare of their Souls; as a Connivance at an Evil in those under our Care and Government, necessarily involves us in Guilt, it will certainly occasion the Enemies of the Gospel to reflect on our holy Profession. It is more especially the Duty of Officers in the Church of Christ, to discountenance all unlawful Actions, and to encourage undissembled Piety in those about them; the Man who neglects to maintain a due Decorum in his own, is a very improper Person to be entrusted with any Authority in God's House; for it is hardly to be supposed, that he who is negligent in exercising his Power over those that are under his immediate and constant Inspection, will be diligent and faithful in his Watch over such as are not so near to him. And therefore it must be allowed, that it is requisite Deacons should govern their Domesticks well, and wisely.

**VI.** IT is necessary that these Officers should be Men of sound Principles, *holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience*. Here I shall inquire,

**1.** WHAT is intended by Faith?

**2.** WHAT a Mystery is?

**3.** OBSERVE that there are mysterious Doctrines in divine Revelation.

**4.** THAT these are to be embraced, and stedfastly held by the Deacons of the Church.

**5.** IN a pure Conscience.

## **1. FAITH is taken in different Senses.**

**(1.)** IT is to be understood of a new and spiritual Principle wrought in the Saints by divine Power, which believes in and accepts of Christ as the alone Saviour of Sinners: Thus, in these Words; *by Grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God* (Ephesians 1:8.). The Nature and Actings of this Grace, cannot be spiritually discerned by any but those who are the

Subjects of it: All unregenerate Persons are unacquainted with this Grace, for it far exceeds the Reach of the unsanctified Understanding. It is held in a pure Conscience. The Exercise of this gracious Principle purges our Consciences, which are naturally defiled; *and put no Difference between us and them, purifying their Hearts by Faith* (Acts 15:9).

(2.) THE Gospel is sometimes designed by it: As for Instance, *Do we make void the Law through Faith, i.e. the Gospel, God forbid; yea, we establish the Law* (Romans 3:31.). This is the Sense in which we are to take it here.

**2. A MYSTERY is something that is incomprehensible and inexplicable:** Some affix no other Idea to an evangelical Mystery than, that it is a Matter which has been secret and hid, and suppose, that upon a Discovery of it, we may be able to fully understand and account for it, they will not allow that its Nature is incomprehensible, but think, that it immediately ceases to be a Mystery, when once it is revealed. This is done with a manifest Design to subvert all such Notions or Principles contained in Revelation, which are not to be comprehended by Reason: But this is much too low a Sense of the Word, as it is applied to the Gospel in the inspired Writings. There are many Things of whose Existence in Nature we cannot possibly doubt, which are yet unaccountable, mysterious, and inexplicable; for the proof of which, we need not look any farther than our selves; the Constitution and Frame of human Nature is really so.

LET such as object to any Doctrine (which is supposed to be a Branch of revealed Truth) because it is mysterious, and not capable of Demonstration by Reason, first acquaint us, how the Soul, which is Immortal, is united to the Body, in Man? What are the *Bands* and *Ligaments* of that Union, which it is certain there is between these two Parts so very different in their Nature? How the Soul actuates and moves every Member of the Body at pleasure? How it is that the Mind becomes affected with the Indisposition of the Body, and that with the Disorder of the Soul? Which are Things as indisputable as they are inexplicable. I say, let those Persons, before they reject Mysteries in Revelation, clearly explain these things to us. If they decline this as a Task to which they are unequal; must they not grant that their own Make is a standing Evidence against their Incredulity in divine Things? which is cherished by this *vain Pretence*, that nothing is to be credited that is *incomprehensible*.

**3. THE Gospel is a Mystery, or Chain of Truths which far transcend our Reason.** We are so far from denying this, that it is our avowed Principle. In this Light it is constantly represented by

the Apostle: Thus he speaks of it; *even the Mystery which hath been hid from Ages and Generations, but now is made manifest to his Saints, to whom God would make known, what are the Riches of the Glory of this Mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory* (Colossians 1:26, 27.): And elsewhere; *but we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World, to our Glory* (1 Corinthians 2:7.). The Revelation of the Scheme of Salvation by a crucified Jesus, is in it fell a Mystery; it doth not bear this Name merely because it was eternally hid in the divine Mind where it was formed: If all sacred Truths were reducible to the Reason of Man, it might be justly expected that Persons of superior Understandings would most readily embrace them, and give the best Account of them; whereas the contrary of that is true. Hence are those Words of the Apostle; *but the natural Man ψυχικὸς ἀνθρώπος*, the Man of Soul (1 Corinthians 2:14.), i.e. a Person furnished with the utmost strength of Reason, *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit g God; they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned.* Which, in my Opinion, is a sufficient Proof, that the Things of God are far above the Reach of the most improved Understanding, and greatest Genius; and discovers the great *Vanity* of those who plead the Sentiments of *polite* Persons, in their Favour. Doctrines of the greatest importance are very mysterious and incomprehensible, among which are these:

(1.) THE Doctrine of the Trinity, or the proper Deity and distinct Personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Concerning the Divinity and Personality of the Father, there is no dispute; and I apprehend, that if the scriptural Account of the Deity of the Son were diligently, and with due Humility attended to, no Objections would ever be advanced against it; because it is as expressly asserted in the sacred Oracles as any Truth therein contained; It; *the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1:1.). The Works performed by Christ, the Perfections which reside in him, and the religious Worship which is given to him distinctly from the Father, clearly evince his proper Deity. And since the same Attributes are laid to be in the Holy Spirit, as are in the Father and Son, and the same humble Worship is to be paid to him, as distinct from them both, we have no just Reason to doubt of his real Divinity and distinct Personality. This Doctrine is a great Mystery; but because we cannot explain how it is consistent with the Unity of the divine Essence, will it be safe or prudent for us to refuse Credit to the clearest Evidence for it in the Word of God? Surely, No.

**(2.)** THE Union of the divine and human Nature in the Person of the Mediator, is a glorious Truth, and as great a Mystery; *the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us, we beheld his Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth* (John 1:14.). The Man Christ Jesus subsists in God, and God resides in him, in a manner not to be explained or conceived of by us; *in him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily* (Colossians 2:9.) . The Apostle pronounces this a great Mystery; *great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh.* Let it be observed, that the Thing it self is so; which is more than some seem willing to allow, who suppose that a Mystery in Scripture, only intends something which has lain hid and reefer, and that there is nothing mysterious or inexplicable in its Nature. As for those who grant that the Union of Christ with God, is ineffable and inconceivable, they have the less reason to object to the Doctrine of the Trinity; because that cannot be accounted for and explained by us. Upon the same Reasoning they may as well deny the Union of Christ with God, as his proper Deity, and distinct Personality from the Father; which they would do well to consider.

**(3.)** THE whole of Salvation by Christ crucified, is a Mystery: The Imputation of our Sins to him, the Infliction of the Punishment due to us upon him, and our Discharge from Guilt on account thereof, the Justification of our Persons by his Obedience, are precious Truths, but very wonderful and mysterious; natural Men, tho' ever so much improved in Knowledge, esteem them irrational and unintelligible Notions. Thus the Apostle acquaints us, that the Cross of Christ, or the Doctrine of Redemption by his Blood, was treated with Contempt by the wise and learned; *we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a Stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness* (1 Corinthians 2:23.). Reason concludes, that a Charge of Guilt to an innocent Person, and punishing of him as if he was the real Offender, is an unaccountable Method by which the Criminal is to be discharged, and wholly freed from an Imputation of Offence. Nor doth it determine more in Favour of accounting the Righteousness of one perfectly holy, to sinful Men, and acting towards them as righteous therein. There are Mysteries not to be understood without divine Illumination; the Knowledge of them is a free Gift, and he is a happy Person who is enabled to spiritually discern and embrace them. In these Doctrines he clearly fees divine Wisdom and Goodness are most eminently display'd; to him Christ as crucified is the *Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.*

**(4.)** THE Doctrine of the Resurrection is a great Mystery. The Body of Man is composed of Dust, to that it returns at Death, and is changed into numerous Forms; how far those Particles of Matter

which once made up the Body of a Man may be separated, or with what a Multitude of other Bodies they may be mixed, none can tell. And therefore if Reason is consulted in this Article of Faith, 'tis no wonder if it be thought an incredible thing. It is only a strict regard to the infinite Knowledge and Power of God, that will bring Men over to the Belief of it, the Difficulties which attend it to human View, are too many and great. And yet this is a fundamental Doctrine, and necessary to be believed, as is most clearly asserted by the Apostle; *if there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your Faith also is vain.* (1 Corinthians 15:13, 14.).

(5.) THE Change which will pass upon the Saints who shall remain, and be alive at the second Coming of Christ, is a *Mystery*; *Behold, I shew you a Mystery, we shall not all sleep, i.e. die; but we shall be changed in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump (for the Trumpet shall sound) and the Dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed* (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.). I apprehend the Secrecy of this Matter, before this Revelation of it, is not the only Reason why the Apostle calls it a Mystery; for if so, it must be concluded, that there is nothing wonderful and mysterious in the Thing It fell, which no Person, as I conceive, can imagine; for if our present Frame be considered as mortal, and naturally tending to Corruption and Death, we shall see evident Cause to allow it is exceeding wonderful that all shall not die: As it is impossible Corruption should inherit Incorruption, it is absolutely necessary that our corrupt Bodies should be freed from those Qualities which now attend them. But then, how can we apprehend this wilt be done without our dying, and being reduced to Dust as others are, especially that this surprizing Change should be wrought in a Manner so sudden as the Apostle declares it will be. Certainly there is not any, taking the Thing in this View, but will readily grant it to be a great Mystery.

**4. IT is necessary that Deacons should embrace, and stedfastly hold these heavenly Truths.** Every Officer in a Christian Community, we may reasonably suppose, has some particular Interest in, and Influence upon the Members; and therefore may, with the more care, bring them over to his Opinion; consequently it is very proper that his Sentiments should be just, and, in all things of *importance*, agreeable to divine Revelation; if not, what less than the Spread of Error can be expected from him? Hence there is special Reason why these Officers should hold the *Mystery of Faith*. All the Saints are called upon to *contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered* to them; such as are chosen to Office, are more especially under Obligation to propagate and defend evangelical Doctrines, *the*

*Form of sound Words* ought to be held fast by them, and not departed from upon any Score whatever.

THEY ought to hold the *Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience*, the Word is συνδήσις, which is sometimes put for the whole Heart, Soul and Spirit, working inwardly upon it fell by way of Reflection; and herein do I exercise my self to have always a Conscience void of Offence toward God, and toward Men (Acts 24:16.); that is to say, a Heart clear from Guilt upon a most serious Reflection on my Conduct The Heart of every Man is naturally polluted, and the Conscience is defiled by Sin contracted, and cannot be pure but as sanctified by the Grace of God, and cleansed by the Blood of Christ; therefore these Doctrines are to be embraced and held with the Heart, as made holy by the Operations of God's Spirit upon it. The Head is not the Seat of evangelical Truths when they are received in a spiritual Manner, but the Soul, the Heart, and Mind. Persons who have thus believed them, will never be prevailed upon to part with them, either thro' the Flattery of pretended Friends, or the ill Treatment of avowed Enemies.

***Fourthly, The Business of Deacons is to serve Tables (Chap. 6:2, 3.); that is to say, those which are to be furnished by the Church.***

**1st.** The Table of the Lord. Christ hath instituted a solemn Ordinance, by which his People commemorate his Sufferings and Death; of which Institution the Apostle gives this Account, *for I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread: And when he had given Thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is My Body, which is broken for you; this do in Remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the Cup, when he had supped, saying, This Cup is the new Testament in my Blood; this do ye in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come* (2 Corinthians 11:23, 24, 25, 26.). The great Care, Wisdom, and Love of Christ, appear in this Appointment; his evident Design therein, is the Consolation of the Saints; it is, that their Faith may be strengthened in his Favour to them; and that they may increase in an Abhorrence of Sin, which was the Cause of his Passion and Death. The Deacons are to provide every thing necessary for the Celebration of this Institution, but not at their own private Expence, for that is the common Concern of the Community; therefore nothing more is to be expected from them in this Particular, than to furnish the Table, and acquaint the Church with the Charge, and bear their Part in defraying of it. These Officers are also to communicate the Bread and Wine to the several Members of the Society.

**2ndly.** It is a Branch of their Work to relieve the Poor out of the Church's Stock raised for that Purpose. The Saints are commanded to shew Tenderness and Compassion to the Afflicted and Low, it is the Will of God that they should assist the Necessitous, that is an acceptable Service to him; *to do good and communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased* (Hebrews 8:16.) This is a Duty not only incumbent on those who abound in Riches, tho' a *larger Contribution* is justly to be expected from them; because *much* is required of such *to whom much is given*: But Persons of a lower Rank are under Obligation to perform Acts of Charity, even those who live by, the *Labour* of their *Hands*; *let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth* (Ephesians 4:20.). A warm Affection to Christ, sincere Love to the Saints as *his Members*, and a true Sense of divine Bounty towards us, will certainly prevail with us to chearfully, and without grudging, practise this Beneficence. It is the Deacon's Business to receive the Collections made by the Church, and assist such therewith whose Circumstances call for help; and therefore, that the Community may be put to no unnecessary Charge, it is proper that these Officers should visit the Members who apply for Assistance, and examine whether it is needful, or if their Poverty arises from Profuseness and Indolence, which, if they find upon Examination, they must reprove these Persons and exhort them to Frugality and Diligence, that the Church may not be burdened with the Cases of such: Besides, visiting the poor Members is necessary on another Account; *viz.* that none may suffer by their too great Modesty, which will not allow them to ask for that Assistance which they really want; some such Persons these are, tho' perhaps their Number is not equal to that of those who are guilty of the other Extream: Again; it may encourage the Indigent and Afflicted, to be visited by their Brethren. If any shall think, that Deacons are not obliged to this by Virtue of their Office, I apprehend they are greatly mistaken. Whatever is given to the Poor, it ought to be with Pity, and sweetness of Disposition; not with sharp and unkind Words, because the Grief occasioned by rough Language, may far exceed the Service done them by what is communicated to them; and then also let it be considered, that the Lord *loveth a cheerful Giver*.

**3rdly.** Another Part of their Business, is to take care of the Minister's Table. It is very evident, that a Minister of the Gospel ought to be provided for by those who enjoy the Benefit of his Ministrations; *let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good Things* (Galatians 6:6.). The temporal Assistance which a diligent Preacher of the divine Word receives

from those who attend upon his Ministry, is not to be compared with the Advantage of his Instructions, as is observed by the Apostle, treating on this Argument; *if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things* (1 Corinthians 9:11.). It belongs to the Deacons to consider, whether the Elder of the Church is agreeably furnished with the Accommodations of Life, and if he is not, to recommend the Consideration of his strait Circumstances to the Members, in order to obtain a more liberal Contribution from them, that he may not be pressed with Difficulties; which, in no *small Degree* will *incommode* him for the *Discharge* of his *important Service*. And if there be any of the Society that either wholly neglect to bear a Part in the Minister's Support, or do not contribute to it according to their Ability, they ought to reprove such, and exhort them to a faithful Performance of their Duty in this so just and reasonable a Thing.

IT must be confessed, that some considerable *Difficulties* will attend a *strict and religious Regard* to the Duties proper to this Office, and therefore that you, my Brethren, who have been now invested therewith, may not conclude that you have undertook a Trust to which you shall prove unequal. I proceed,

***Fifthly, To offer a few Things for your Encouragement in this Undertaking.***

1. The Service to which you are called is Christ's; his Interest, and the Good of his People are concerned in this Matter. That being duly considered, will be sufficient of it self to inspire you with Courage, and raise you above all the Troubles which you are apprehensive will necessarily attend the Execution of your Office. We are all under infinite Obligations to him; how great were the Sufferings to which he freely submitted upon our Account! What a Variety of precious Benefits do we receive from him! our Deliverance from eternal Ruin cost him his Life. A vast Treasure of Grace he expends upon his People to meeten them for Heaven, and will eternally communicate to them, to compleat their Happiness there. Therefore what Work (wherein his Honour is interested) shall we esteem too arduous for us to undertake, or what Difficulties too great to encounter with? so we may but be instrumental in advancing the Cause of one to whom we are thus highly obliged. If these Things have their proper weight upon our Minds, we shall think *his Yoke is easy and his Burden is light* (Matthew 11:30.).

2. He that has called you will certainly assist you in his Service, and therefore you have no reason to be discouraged: Christ, the Head of the Church, has a fulness of Grace in his Hands; which is abundantly more than equal to the Wants of his Servants and Members.

Whatever Exercises he brings upon his People, he is able and determined to afford them suitable Support; *as their Days are, their Strength shall be* (Deuteronomy 33:25.). And whenever he directs any in his Providence to engage in his sacred Work, he furnishes them for it.

I am apprehensive, my Brethren, that your Minds may be struck with some Concern, by hearing the Qualifications that are necessary for Persons who undertake this Office and the Duties proper to it, as being conscious of your own Inability. But consider that your Lord is able to communicate every needful Virtue, and to carry you through those Difficulties which appear to you insuperable; *his Grace is sufficient for you, and his Strength will be made perfect in Weakness* (1 Corinthians 12:9.). It is with me unquestionable, that your Eyes are directed to him from whom all your Strength is derived. And may you of *his Fulness receive, and Grace for Grace* (John 1:16.).

**3.** The Office is difficult, but the Honour arising from the proper Discharge of it is great. I am very far from thinking that it is prudent or safe for us, to embark in the Cause of Religion with a *View* to acquire *Applause* from Men, or to raise our *Reputation in the world*; that is an evident Sign of a base and low Disposition of Mind. But then, it is lawful to animate and raise our Spirits under a Prospect of the Troubles to which we expose our selves, in an Adherence to the Interest of Christ, by considering, that it is an unspeakable Honour put upon us, to be called to the meanest Post in his House: Thus the Psalmist did, as appears by his own Words; *For a Day in thy Courts is better than a Thousand: I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness* (Psalm 84:10.).

I UNFEIGNEDLY wish, that you may be enabled *to use the Office of deacons well, and so purchase to your selves good Degree, and great Boldness in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 3:13.).

## SERMON 6

### 1 CHRONICLES 4:10

“And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my Coast; and that thine Hand might be with me; and that thou wouldest keep me from Evil, that it might not grieve me. And God granted unto him that which he requested.”

# A DISCOURSE ON THE PRAYER OF JABEZ;

## CONTAINING THE SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL SERMONS PREACHED WITHIN CRIPPLEGATE.

*Publish'd at the REQUEST of some who heard them.*

THIS Chapter, with several others, contain an Account of the Families of the Children of *Israel*. The Person whom these Words concern was of that Race, but of what particular Family is not very evidentHe is declared to be *more honourable than his Brethren* in the Verse preceding, viz. for his Piety, as we have reason to conclude from these Words, which are taken by some as a Vow, by others as a solemn Deprecation The latter Sense is agreeable to me. *In this commendation of Jabez, we may observe:*

- I. His solemn Worshipping of God; *He called on the God of Israel.*
- II. The Favours he humbly asked.
- III. The gracious Answer he received; *God granted unto him that which he requested*

**I. We are to consider his solemn Worshipping of God. I shall,**

**First.** *Attend to the Title* the great Jehovah has here given him.

**Secondly.** *To Jabez*, his Adoration of him.

**First.** It will be proper to take Notice of the Character ascribed to the Divine Being, which is *the God of Israel*. This Name *Israel* was given to *Jacob* upon his wrestling with God by Prayer and prevailing (Genesis 32:28.); which Name his natural Posterity afterwards, bore; by it the Body of the Jewish Nation is frequently designed, as in these Words, *But Israel which followed after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness* (Romans 9:31.). Thus also in the same Epistle, *Israel hath not obtained that which be seeketh for* (Romans 11:7.) The Lord stiles himself the God of this People in general; I am *the Lord thy God* (Exodus 20:2.). Which Words refer to the *Jews* understood collectively, and design taking them under his providential Care and Protection, and conferring upon them such Immunities as no other Nation in the Earth at that Time enjoyed; but are not expressive of God's standing in an everlasting Relation to, them, by virtue of the Covenant of Grace. In other Places, a peculiar People among them, with many of the *Gentiles*, are plainly designed: Thus in these Words of the Apostle, *And so all Israel shall be saved* (Romans 11:26.). The whole Race of the *Jews* cannot be here intended, for they were not all eternally saved; and since the Apostle in this Place

designedly treats of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, he must intend, by the Term *Israel*, a special and peculiar Number of Persons, of the *Jewish*, and *Gentile* Race: To whom God stands in a new Covenant-Relation, or he is their God in such a Sense, as he is not: the God of any others'; he became so in all that he is and has, by an Act of free Donation.

**1.** God gave himself to them; which is evident from that comprehensive Promise of the new Covenant; *And they shall be my People, and I will be their God* (Jeremiah 32:38.).

(1.) The Father formed a Resolution in Eternity to render the Elect happy, and in infinite Wisdom fixed upon Methods no less surprizing than effectual, to bring; about this gracious Intention: All his Decrees are subservient to this Purpose, and his Acts in Providence as well as Grace tend to its Accomplishment; so that the Whole of what he does, is wisely calculated, to promote the Happiness of those to whom he stands in a foederal Relation. It is his unalterable Determination to enjoy, and for ever to be enjoyed by them, or eternally to communicate consummate Bliss, and inconceivable Glory to them in Heaven. With very good Reason therefore, it may be concluded, that the Person of the Father is theirs.

(2.) This is as true of the Son, who, with the Father, concurred in the Design of their eternal Salvation, and is given to them, and for them; *For God so loved the World, he gave his only begotten Son* (John 3:16.). This Donation of Christ was the Result of his own, as it is of the Father's good Pleasure. All that he did, or acts, is with a manifest View to the Welfare of these Persons: His Assumption of our Nature, obeying the Law, suffering on the Cross, and rising from the Dead, his Ascension to Heaven, and making Intercession there, all directly tend to secure the everlasting Felicity of God's Chosen. Whence it is easy to observe, that God the Son is become theirs.

(3.) They have the same Interest in the Holy Spirit, who is also given to them: *Because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us* (Romans 5:5.) The third Person in the Trinity agrees with the Father and the Son in carrying on the Design of the Salvation of Sinners: He is not less concerned this great Affair; pursuant to the Father's Purpose in Election, and the Son's in Redemption, the Holy Spirit quickens the Elect, when dead in Sin, and continues Influences upon them, to ripen the Work of Grace in them, until it is perfected in Glory. At the Time of Regeneration he enters into the Soul, and remains there as a Spirit of Illumination and Consolation: *He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever* (1 John 14:16.). Thus all the Persons in the Godhead are the Saints.

**2.** All the Divine Attributes are the Elects; every Perfection in God displays it self in bringing about their Salvation.

(1.) Love gave birth to the Design, and runs through every Part of it. Our Predestination to immortal Dignity and Honour, such as is proper to the Sons of God, *is to the Praise of the Glory of Free Grace* (Ephesians 1:5, 6.). All the Steps that God has took in order to its Accomplishment, are Fruits of the same infinite Goodness, All his Procedures towards these Persons spring from , and are perfectly consistent with his Love to them. Hence the Apostle *John* observes, that *God is Love* (1 John 4:16.), *i.e.* to those who by his Spirit know and believe their Interest in Divine Favour.

(2.) The Wisdom of God hath as deeply interested it self in promoting of the Saints Happiness: His Love and Grace formed the Resolution, and Wisdom directed to all the Means leading on to the Execution. As only boundless Grace could give Rise to the stupendous Decree of saving Sinners, so infinite Wisdom alone could surmount the Difficulties attending it, and point out Methods suitable to accomplish it. In our Salvation Sin is pardoned and yet punished; we escape the Curse of the Law notwithstanding its just Menaces are suffered; we are delivered from the awful Stroke of Sin-avenging Justice, and yet it loses nothing of its Demands. We are wholly unable to obey the Law, but yet we are justified by it, and pronounced perfectly righteous; all which is through the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ for us. This Way of securing Divine Honour, in conjunction with our Happiness, sufficiently evinces, that infinite Wisdom contrived our Recovery. For this Reason the Apostle calls the Gospel, which is a Revelation hereof, the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery; and the hidden Wisdom, that God ordained to our Glory* (1 Corinthians 2:7.).

(3.) The Power of God has ever acted in favour of the Elect. Such Obstructions attended their Salvation that Omnipotence only could remove; and such Adversaries are engaged against them, that almighty Power alone could conquer. They are naturally in such a State which requires the Exertion of the same unlimited Power to meeten them for Glory. And the Number, Policy, and Vigilance of their Enemies, with their own Weakness, make it necessary for them to expect all their Protection from above, Their Redemption was a Work of Divine Power; hence Christ, as crucified, is laid to be the *Power as well as the Wisdom of God* (1 Corinthians 1:24.). Nor is this Divine Perfection less apparent in their Preservation to Glory, *who are kept by the Power of God unto Salvation* (1 Peter 1:5.).

(4.) Divine Faithfulness stands engaged for the Security of God's People. Many and full are the Promises that refer to the Salvation of

*Israel*: All which may be safely relied on, because of the eternal Veracity of their infinitely great Author, who it is absolutely impossible should ever fail of accomplishing what he has given his Word to do for any. This the Apostle improves as an Encouragement to Faith, under Sufferings for the Gospel's sake; *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, be cannot deny himself.* (2 Timothy 2:13.). He is not mutable, as Creatures are, but is eternally above all *Variableness or shadow of Turning* (James 1:17.) He never declines in his Favour, nor sinks below his gracious Engagements. Since therefore he designed, and has promised the compleat Happiness of his own, as appears in these Words, *In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lye promised* (Titus 1:2.), it may be justly concluded, that *they shall be Sanctified wholly, that their Soul, Body and Spirit, shall be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;* as the same Apostle observes, *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it* (1 Thessalonians 5:23:24.).

(5.) The Justice of God acts in favour of the Elect, as well as the other Divine Perfections; that is an Attribute which strikes a guilty Creature, without hope of an Interest in Christ, with the greatest Terror; it speaks nothing but eternal Destruction to a Sinner out of him, and therefore the Consideration of it must be most awful, without a View of his Satisfaction. But as its Demands have been fully answered by Christ, the Surety of his People, it concurs with Goodness in promoting their Salvation; *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and peace have kissed each other* (Psalm 85:10.). Since plenary Satisfaction is made for the Sins of the Elect, this Perfection in God stands engaged for their Security. Justice to Christ; their Head, who suffered for them, requires their eternal Felicity; and therefore this Divine Attribute, which cannot be thought of, by guilty Creatures as such, without the greatest Emotion, affords solid Peace and Tranquillity, to those who are interested in Christ, because the Honour of it is as much concerned in their Happiness as the Glory of rich Grace; *whom God hath let forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness, for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this Time his Righteousness, that be might be just, i.e. appear to be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus* (Romans 3:25, 26.).

**3.** All that God has is the Saints: His infinite Treasures of Grace and Glory are all made theirs by an Act of his sovereign Will, in order to their eternal Happiness.

(1.) His Grace. He is infinitely rich in Mercy in himself; *but God who is rich in Mercy* (Ephesians 2:4.). And he has an immense Stock

of Grace by him, which he designed to communicate to the Objects of his Favour; hence lays the Psalmist, *O! how great is thy Goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the Sons of Men* (Psalm 31:19.). The Apostle Peter stiles the Lord, *the God of all Grace* (1 Peter 5:10.). There is no Grace the Saints can need, but it is in their Covenant-God, and will be communicated to them. As guilty Creatures Pardon is necessary, this they plentifully receive, yea, equal to the Greatness of their Guilt, how much soever it is aggravated; *in whom we bare Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace* (Ephesians 1:7). As stripp'd of original Righteousness, a compleat one they must be furnished with from another, in order to their Acceptance; this they have in Christ, *according to the same Grace* (Titus 3:7.). As polluted Creatures, Holiness is necessary to be wrought in them, to meeten them for everlasting Happiness; this also they partake of, from the same Fountain of God's Free Grace. Their Regeneration is an Effect of that *abundant Mercy* (1 Peter 1:3.) which there is in their heavenly Father. As they are weak or unable to defend themselves, and their Enemies are numerous and potent, continued Supplies of Grace are absolutely needful to preserve them from falling; this shall not be wanting to them, *For God will supply all their Needs according to his Riches in Glory, ἐν Χριστῷ, in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:19.). Thus the God of all Grace, will dispense all that Grace which is necessary for them; *he will give Grace* (Psalm 84:11.), yea, *more Grace to the humble* (James 4:6.), whatever they need.

(2.) Glory is made theirs; a never failing Fountain of which there is in God; hence he is stiled the *Father of Glory* (Ephesians 1:17.) as he is the *Father of Lights* (James 1:17.) because all spiritual Illumination and eternal Rays of Light spring from him. Our Ideas of the happy State of Saints departed, fall vainly below the Greatness of its Glory: *It doth not yet appear, i.e. it Is not at present known what we shall be* (The most we are now able to say of heavenly Bliss, is: that it consists in uninterrupted Communion with God and Christ, and transforming Views of his ever glorious Person, who is *fairer than the Children of Men* (1 John 3:2.): *When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Christ, *the Sun of Righteousness* (Malachi 4:2.), sheds Beams of Light upon all the Inhabitants of the upper World, which they reflect to their mutual Pleasure and Admiration, as we are fully assured; but while we are here our Conceptions cannot rise up to the Blessedness of that State, the Imperfection of our present, renders us unable to form adequate Ideas of the amazing Glory of our future State: It is not possible to

know what the Happiness of Heaven is before its Enjoyment; it is an *exceeding and an eternal Weight of Glory* (2 Corinthians 4:17.); it far exceeds the Compass of our imperfect Understandings, we cannot comprehend it; and the Weakness of our mortal Frame, which must be changed in order to bear it. Now all this inconceivable Glory is absolutely given to God's *Israel*, by him who is the Source of it, and is able to perserve them to it: *In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lye promised before the World began* (Titus 1:2.).

**4.** There are several things concerning the Act of God's giving himself to his *Israel* very worthy of our Notice. As,

(1.) It was an Act of pure Grace, This Procedure of God, in favour of his People, can be resolved into no other Cause, than that of his *own good Pleasure*. He stands in such a Relation to them which he does not to others; but it is not because they are preferable to those who have no such foederal Interest in him, their Nature is as depraved, and their Actions are as contrary to his Law. The Apostle answers this Question, *Are we better than they?* in the Negative, *no, in no wife* (Romans 3:9.); and therefore nothing in them could induce God thus to become theirs in a Covenant-way, it's the Result of his own Free Grace alone.

(2.) This was an Act of Sovereignty. It was merely owing to the Divine Will that *Peter* was interested in God, and not *Judas*. None among the Sons of Men lay claim to so high a Privilege as their Due, for they all deserve to be eternally banished from God, and to lie under his awful Vengeance, on Account of their Corruption and Guilt: Hence it is evident, that the Interest any of them have in God, must be ascribed to his sovereign Determination, thus, to shew Favour to them, while he refuses this Dignity and Happiness to others, not more undeserving of his favourable Notice than they are; agreeable to the Apostle's Observation, *He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth* (Romans 9:18.).

(3.) It is an irreversible Act. The Elect can never be deprived of that Covenant-Interest which they have in God. The Cause and Spring of it will never cease; that is to say, the Love of God, which is absolutely immutable, and therefore eternally secures their Interest in himself. It is by virtue of a firm Covenant of Grace that God is theirs, in which he engages, *they shall be his People, and he will be their God* (Jeremiah 32:38.). This *Covenant he will not break, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of his Lips* (Psalm 89:34.). But unless the Covenant of Grace can be violated, the Saints wilt not lose their Interest in its infinitely great Author, which never can be, for the Accomplishment of all its glorious and precious Promises

entirely, rests on the Veracity and Faithfulness of God himself: It therefore *is a sure Covenant* (2 Samuel 23:5.), and being so, all in that Covenant stand in an inseparable Relation to God. Farther, there is an indissoluble Union subsisting between Christ and the Saints he is their Head, and they are his Members; nor will it ever be in the Power of any to rend them from him, And so long as this Union continues, they may depend upon a peculiar and foederal Interest in the Father; till he ceases to be a God to the Head, he will not cease to be a God to the Members. Christ is ascended to his *God and our God, to his Father and our Father* (John 20:17.). These Things abundantly evince the eternal Duration of Our Interest in the great Jehovah.

## 5. From this Doctrine I infer two Things,

(1.) That Believers have no cause of Fear: 'Tis true, their Enemies are very numerous, and their Power, is exceeding great, and they are not capable of defending themselves a Moment; notwithstanding which, they have no reason to be terrified, for Omnipotence it self is engaged their Security, and therefore the Will of their Adversaries shall never be accomplished upon them: Each of them may say with the Psalmist, *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid* (Psalm 27:1.)?

(2.) Believers only are happy Persons. Happiness all Men are seeking to obtain, but they are either fatally mistaken in their Notions concerning it, or in the Way to arrive at the Possession of it: Many conceive that it consists in Riches, Pleasures and Honours; others imagine, that extensive Knowledge, and Tranquillity of Mind, is true Felicity. These come nearer to it than the former, but yet fall short; 'Tis only the Knowledge of, and Communion with God in a Mediator, a settled Peace, and Composure of Mind arising from thence, that our real Happiness consists in here; and consummate Felicity hereafter will consist in Conformity to, and in the Enjoyment of God and Christ, which is not attainable by any Thing that we can do, as Men naturally conceit. The Children of God are, many of them, poor, afflicted, and despised in this World, yet they alone are truly happy Persons, because they only are interested in God, the Source and Fountain of real and perfect Bliss. *Happy is that People whose God is the Lord* (Psalm 144:15.), to them *he will shew the Path of Life; in his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand are pleasures for evermore* (Psalm 16:11.).

**Secondly.** I proceed to consider, Jabez's solemn Worshipping of God, *He called on the God of Israel*. By this is sometimes intended Worship in general, as in these Words, *Then began Men to call upon*

*the Name of the Lord* (Genesis 4:26.), *i.e.* to join together in his publick Worship. In other Places; it designs a particular Branch of religious Worship, *viz.* Prayer; thus in these Words, *and call upon me in a Day of Trouble* (Psalm 50:15.) This is a Part of natural Religion; or, it is a Duty of a moral Nature, and is incumbent on all Persons; as well on the Unregenerate as on those who are born again; hence the Apostle *Peter*, at the same Time he tells *Simon Magus* that *be was in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity*, puts him upon the Practice of this Duty; *and pray God* (Acts 8:22, 23.). Although *the Prayer* of an unregenerate Person, is an *Abomination* (Proverbs 28:9.), he is not excusable in the Neglect thereof: Greater Guilt is contracted by the entire Omission of a Duty, than attends the improper Discharge it. If Prayer can be neglected by unregenerate Persons, because they cannot perform it in an acceptable Manner, they may also decline to perform the civil Actions of Life upon the same Principle, for *the Plowing of the Wicked is sin* (Proverbs 21:4.); which, I suppose, none will think it proper they should. *What I shall farther offer on this Head, immediately concerns the Saints; and it will be contained in shewing this to be their Duty that the Holy Spirit is their Director in it; and, that they have great Encouragements to practise it.*

**1st.** Prayer is the indispensable Duty of Believers. This is so evident, that I imagine I might be excused insisting on the Proof of it, however backward, through various Causes, they may sometimes be to engage in it.

Personal and private Prayer is a Duty they are under Obligation conscientiously to regard; Jesus Christ exhorts to this, *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly* (Matthew 6:6.). The Variety of our Wants, the Multitude of our Difficulties, the great Number of our Temptations, our own Inability, and absolute Dependence on God, should excite us to a *constant* Attendance at the Throne of Grace, I am of Opinion, we may best judge of the Care of our Souls, by a Readiness to draw nigh to God in secret Prayer, or Backwardness to approach his Presence in our Closets. If a spiritual Frame is maintained in us we shall closely attend to this Duty; but if we are lukewarm, and sunk in the Exercise of our Graces, we shall be ready to improve every trivial Affair which may occur, as an Excuse for our Neglect in this Thing. This is as well our Privilege as our Duty. In Prayer to God we may use the utmost Freedom in Complaints: We need have no Check upon us, from, an Apprehension that he will take Advantage against us for, or upbraid us with, those Evils we complain of before him; this too frequently

is the Manner of poor guilty Creatures towards one another, but it is not the Manner of an infinitely gracious God, we therefore may unbosom our whole Souls to him, and tell him of any, or all the *vile Lusts* that distress and plague us: We may mention all our Temptations, and freely confess how ready our corrupt Nature is to yield to them, or how far it may have so done, in any Instances, to our unspeakable Grief, without the least Thought of being upbraided therewith hereafter, We also may be full as free in our Petitions: As God *is able to do exceeding abundantly above* all that *we ask or think* (Ephesians 3:20.): He allows us to intreat for whatever is needful to our spiritual Support, Relief, and Consolation. Since we have this liberty of Access to the Throne of Grace, and may use such freedom in our Addresses to our heavenly Father, how base are our Hearts, which frequently tempt us to decline the Practice of this important Duty, and the Improvement of so inestimable a Privilege.

**2.** Family Prayer should be constantly attended to. The Worship of God ought to be maintained in all the Families of the Saints. That Family in which solemn and joint Prayer is wholly neglected, is far from being such as it ought to be; in this Particular â€˜tis very much unlike a Christian one; happy would it be with us were we wrought up to the same Resolution that Joshua was, who said, *As for me and my House we will serve the Lord* (Joshua 24:15.) for we should certainly find our own Advantage in it. The great God will shew very high Resentment against those Families that neglect his Worship: *Pour out thy Fury upon the Heathen, that know thee not, and upon all the Families that call not on they Name* (Jeremiah 10:25.). It cannot but be thought a Duty incumbent on Matters of Families, to pray with, and for their Children and Servants, whom Providence has put under their Care and Inspection; a faithful Attendance hereon may, at least, strike their Minds with an Awe of God, and lay such a Check upon them, which may prevent their sinning as others do. I doubt not but many can attest to the Truth of this by their Experience. Besides, as we ought to endeavour the Conviction of those under our immediate Notice, we can't tell how far God may please to succeed the Discharge of our Duty in this Particular that way; however, whether or not the Effect follows, which we should desire, that is to say, the spiritual Good of those about us, we shall keep clear of *their Blood*, if we are found in the Practice of our Duty towards them. It is not improbable but some may say, they are convinced it is their Duty to pray in their Families, but that they are not furnished with suitable Gifts, and therefore they are obliged to omit it; such I would ask, if they have at all attempted it? If they have not they must allow me to say, it is trifling to urge their Want of proper Furniture, as an Excuse for this Neglect. Besides, it can hardly be thought, that a Person sensible, of himself,

his State by Nature, his Need of Christ, and of his Suitableness as a Saviour, can be utterly unable to perform this Branch of religious Worship in his own Family, where strict Method, proper Coherence, and Fluency of Expression, are not absolutely necessary to the useful Discharge of it. Again, Gifts improve by using: I have known some who were not eminently furnished for such a Work, that upon the Exercise of the Abilities they had, a Blessing has attended, and their Improvement has been very visible. I add, that since Family Prayer is a Duty, we ought to be careful, lest we render our selves unfit for it, or incapable of it, by Conversation, or otherwise, when we are abroad.

**3.** Social and public Prayer Believers ought to practise. The Advantages arising from the conscientious Observance of this are more than, perhaps, are commonly thought of; hereby the Saints are mutually edified, comforted and strengthened, their Hearts are strongly cemented together in Love; and it has a wonderful Tendency to promote spiritual Affection to Divine Things. It is no small Part of the Commendation given by the Holy Ghost of the primitive Churches, that they practised this Duty; *they continued stedfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine and Fellowship, in breaking of Bread and in Prayers* (Acts 2:42.). Such who are in Church-Fellowship are doubtless under Obligation jointly to confess their Imperfections, and intreat the Divine Blessing on the Word and Ordinances preached and administer'd among them, that their Souls may be *built up in their most holy Faith*, and to pray that *Peace maybe within Zion's Walls, and Prosperity in all her Palaces* (Psalm 122:7.). There is at this Day a sorrowful Neglect of this Duty, which, among many other Things, makes it but too evident, that the Glory of our Religion is greatly eclipsed: May the Lord hasten a Revival of it, if it be his Will.

**2nd.** The Holy Spirit is the Director of the Saints in this Duty; on Account of the Assistance which he gives in the spiritual Performance of this Branch of Worship he is called, *the Spirit of Supplications* (Zechariah 12:10.).

*The Preparation of the Heart in Man* for this Duty is from God, as well as *the Answer of the Tongue*. (Providence 16:1.).

**1.** The Divine Spirit teaches us what to pray for: We *know not how to order our Speech by reason of Darkness* (Job 37:19.). Our spiritual Ignorance renders, it necessary for Us, to depend on heavenly Influence and Guidance, when we draw nigh to God in Prayer, *for we know not what to pray for as we ought*. Without Instruction from above we are incapable of a proper Discharge of this important Duty; *as we are not sufficient of our selves to think*

*any Thing as of our selves;* (2 Corinthians 3:5.) we must needs be unequal to a Service of this Nature, wherein are required a profound Reverence of the Divine Majesty, an humble Opinion of our selves, spiritual Ideas of Things naturally unknown, fervent Desires of what we naturally are not disposed to seek after, and our Thoughts intently fixed on, invisible Objects. Hence it is evident, that our spiritual Prayers are effected under a Supernatural Influence; it is *the Spirit helpeth our Infirmitie*s, and makes Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26.).

**2.** He excites our Desires after those Things which we pray for. Our Supplications consist only of a few cold and formal Petitions, unless our Affections are moved, and our Hearts ascend up to God, whose Name we invocate: It is the Heart he looks at; Lip-Service is far from being acceptable to him. In this Duty our Heart should always be the Guide to our Lips. What we express with our Tongues ought to be the unfeigned Desire of our souls. Now as *we are bent to backsliding* (Hosea 11:7.) it is absolutely necessary that we should be divinely attracted: The Church was justly sensible of this when she thus expressed her self, *Draw me, we will run after thee* (Song of Solomon 1:4.). The Necessity of such an heavenly Attraction and Influence is evident to every Believer, who finds himself naturally indisposed to Things of a spiritual Kind. The great Difference he experiences in his Soul, in his Solemn Approaches to God, sufficiently convinces him, that all his Dependance ought to be on the Holy Ghost in his Addresses at the Divine Throne. Sometimes his Heart is cold, vain, and wandering, in the Beginning of this Duty; before the Conclusion, it may be, it is greatly enlarged, and is made *like to the Chariots of a willing People* (Chap. 6:12.); at other Seasons, when he imagines himself to be in a most suitable Frame for a Work of this Nature, and therefore chearfully engages in it, on a sudden his Affections cool, his Thoughts rove, and his Soul is greatly contracted: Wherefore: he cannot but conclude, it is a vain Thing. to attempt this Duty without a View to. the gracious Operation and Aid of the Spirit of God.

**3.** He gives them Liberty and Freedom in Prayer. The People of God have always Liberty of Access to him through Jesus Christ. Under every Temptation, Distress and Affliction, they may freely draw nigh to their heavenly Father, and spread their Case before him; but it is not at every Season they have Liberty in their Access to God; as the Psalmist was they all sometimes are, *shut up, and cannot come forth* (Psalms 88:8.): A Sense of their Guilt fills them with Shame, and almost forces them to Silence. It is only when the Spirit of Christ *takes of his Things, and shews them* (John 16:14.) to their Souls, that they have inward Freedom. A View, by Faith, of his Blood,

Righteousness, Grace, and Intercession, are the Foundation of the Believer's Boldness; *In whom we have Boldness and Access, with Confidence, through the Faith of him* (Ephesians 3:12.); and the Spirit of Grace is the Efficient, or Author, of that Freedom: *Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty* (2 Corinthians 3:17.).

**4.** He causes us to hope for what we ask, The Exercise of Faith is necessary in this Duty. *Let him ask in Faith* (James 1:6.) is the Direction of the Apostle James, If we have no Expectation Of receiving a Favour, upon an Application to a Friend, we are easily prevailed with to decline it; so, if we have no Hopes of obtaining a gracious Answer to our Prayers from God, our Inclination to call upon him will sensibly abate. Without some Encouragement to expect a favourable Audience with God our Petitions to him will be very faint and cool; and therefore the Influence of the Spirit of Faith should always be desired by us when we engage in this sacred Duty, as what is absolutely needful to our comfortable Performance of it. With what Satisfaction, Liberty and Pleasure, as well as *Assurance of Faith* (Hebrews 10:22.), do the Saints draw nigh to God, when the Holy Ghost powerfully applies the Divine Promises to their Souls; such as, *Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you* (Luke 11:9.) *I the Lord will bear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them* (Isaiah 41:21.).

3rd. The Encouragements to this Duty are many, which, if they have a suitable Influence upon us, will cause us diligently to attend on it.

**1.** God's Relation to us. He hath been pleased, of his infinite Goodness, to make us his Children. *Behold, what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God* (1 John 3:1.); which our Saviour proposes as an encouraging Motive to *Prayer*, *If ye then, being Evil, know how to give good Gifts your Children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good Things to them that ask him* (Matthew 7:11.). A tender Parent can't but be moved with the Intreaties of his Child under Distress, and be ready to give Relief if he is able. The Compassion of God, towards his People, infinitely exceeds the tenderest Bowels of any earthly Parent, and therefore we may call upon him with *a full Assurance* of obtaining all needful Supplies and Succour from him.

**2.** His Perfections may encourage us to engage in this important Duty.

**(1.)** His Omnipotence. That God to whom we pray has a perfect Knowledge of the Frame and Desires of our Souls; which, as it ought to strike us with an humble Awe, when we come before him, to it may justly be improved, as a great Encouragement to Us, in all

our solemn Acts of Devotion, to hope for what we ask, however imperfectly we may express our selves to him: *He that searcheth the Hearts knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit* (Romans 8:7.).

(2.) The Omnipotence of God raises our Expectations of Relief in our Addresses to him, A real and intimate Friend may sympathize with us Under Trouble, and be strongly inclined to free us from it, but it is often out of the Power of our best Friends to relieve us when in distress. This cannot be supposed of our heavenly Father, who is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think* (Ephesians 3:20.). The Saints Help in God is like Water in a Fountain, ever flowing and never dry. Neither the Number, nor the Greatness of their Difficulties, should discourage them in a Dependance on omnipotent Power, because that makes hard Things easy, and pressing Things light.

(3.) His infinite Goodness. The Ability of a Person to extricate us out of great Troubles, without a Will to do it, affords us no hope of Relief. Now, as God is able to help us, be our Case ever so desperate in it self, his immense Favour will certainly induce him to regard; and seasonably succour us. The infinite Love, which is in his Heart towards his People, will always draw forth his Power to their Support, and speedy Deliverance out of threatening Dangers. What great Encouragement Is this to wait upon him in Prayer!

3. The Promises God has made of hearing the Prayers of his People, may well encourage them closely to attend on this Duty: *Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear* (Isaiah 65:24.). Divine Promises are sure and firm; *they are all yea and amen to the Glory* (2 Corinthians 1:20.) of their Author. This, among others, the Lord will inviolably keep, and therefore we ought never to be discouraged in praying to him, from an Apprehension that he will deny us a gracious Audience or Answer.

4. Christ's Intercession wonderfully encourages the Saints to address the Throne of Grace. His Regard to his People, now he is in Heaven, is the same that it was, when he was here on Earth; his Exaltation at God's right Hand makes no Alteration in his Affections towards Sinners; *He ever lives to make Intercession for them* (Romans 8:34.), he is their Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1.), and *will throughly plead their Cause*; (Jeremiah 1:34.); he prays the Father for all necessary Grace to be communicated to his People here, and declares it to be his Will, that they should be with him for ever in Glory hereafter (John 17:24.); and therefore they cannot, in their Petitions to God for spiritual Favours, exceed him in his Intercession for them. O! what Encouragement is it to Faith in this Duty, that Christ continually intercedes with God, to grant those Blessings to

us, which we pray to him for, as what are requisite to our spiritual Advantage and Comfort. I go on,

## ***II. To consider the Favours he asked. They are various, and very great,***

**1st.** He intreats that God would bless him: *O that thou wouldest bless me indeed.* It was real Happiness that he was desirous to obtain from God, who is the Fountain and Spring of all true Blessedness. No Creature can be happy in a State of Distance from him, or without Nearness to him, and Communion with him. The Happiness of guilty Creatures, as we are, consists in a Deliverance from that which renders us Unhappy, and in the Communication of special spiritual and eternal Blessings to us.

**1.** The Felicity of a fallen and guilty Creature consists in a Deliverance from that which renders him unhappy.

(1.) From Guilt contracted. Sin is the procuring Cause of all Misery and Infelicity; It Is that which exposes us to Afflictions and Death in this World, and that draws down upon Sinners the Vengeance of God in the next. *The Wages Sin is Death, i.e. eternal Death, as the Gift of God is eternal Life* (Romans 6:23.); and therefore there is no possibility of being Happy without a Discharge from Guilt. Those only are to be esteemed happy Persons, who obtain the Remission of their Sins by Christ's Blood: *Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered. Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin* (Romans 4:7, 8.). Which Words plainly teach us, that Pardon is absolutely necessary to Happiness. Unless a Man's Sins are forgiven him, whatever his outward Circumstances may be, he is a miserable Person; on the contrary, such who are discharged of their Guilt are truly happy, how much soever they are afflicted and despised in this Life.

(2.) It necessarily supposes a Freedom from Condemnation. Sin subjects us to a Curse: *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them* (Galatians 3:10.). God, as a Lawgiver, pronounces dreadful Menaces against guilty Creatures as such; nor is it possible to escape the Malediction denounced, without an Interest in Christ's Satisfaction; that, indeed, effectually secures us, from it: *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1.). A Charge of Guilt and Condemnation, are inseparable. If a Man is under the Imputation of Sin he is also Condemned; but if he is acquitted of his Crimes, by virtue of Christ's Blood, he is not liable to any Divine Threatenings.

**(3.)** The Happiness of guilty Creatures supposes a Security from Divine Anger, which their Sins have exposed them to. Every Act of Transgression against the Law subjects us to the awful Displeasure of God; and therefore it is the greatest: Unhappiness to lie under a Charge of Guilt. Eternal Misery hangs over such whose Sins are not remitted; but those who obtain a Discharge of their Guilt through Jesus. Christ, are eternally secured from the Stroke of Divine Justice; *being justified by Christ's Blood we shall be saved from Wrath through him* (Romans 5:9.).

**2.** Our Felicity is inclusive of the Communication of all special, spiritual and eternal Blessings.

(1.) Adoption, or being made Sons to God. This unspeakable Honour and Dignity is conferred upon us who are Vile and sinful *Creatures*; *having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ, to himself.* (Ephesians 1:5.) By Virtue of this Relation to God we are constituted Heirs of him; *If Children these Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ* (Romans 8:17.). It is an inexpressible Happiness to be interested in this glorious Privilege for hereby we are entitled to Grace and Glory, or are made Heirs of all that God is, and has, who is the Fountain of real Felicity

(2.) Justification is another Branch of true Blessedness. The Righteousness of Christ being put upon a Person recommends him to, and gives him eternal Acceptance with God. Now such who have the Divine Approbation must necessarily be concluded Happy, according to *David*, and the Apostle, who quotes his Words, *Even as David also describeth the Blessedness of the Man, to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works* (Romans 4:6.) This gives us a proper and just Claim to everlasting Happiness; *That being justified by his Grace we might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life* (Titus 3:7.). Those who are justified have an indisputable and unalienable Title to all the Glory of Heaven, and shall certainly be brought to the Enjoyment of it: *Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them be also glorified* (Romans 8:30.). These Benefits of Adoption and Justification ensure to us Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

**(3.)** Regeneration and Sanctification. We are naturally *dead in* (Ephesians 2:1.), and under the *Dominion of Sin* (Romans 6:14.), and are also in Bondage to Satan, which is a very unhappy Condition; but God of his *rich Mercy quickens us* (Ephesians 2:1.), or communicates spiritual Life to our Souls, and delivers us *from the Power of Darkness*, and translates us *into the Kingdom Of his dear Son* (Colossians 1:13.); he implants a Principle of Holiness in us

who are naturally *carnal and sold under Sin* (Romans 7:14.); devoid of any Inclination to, or Ability to perform spiritual Good: *God hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling* (2 Timothy 1:9.); This Work is the Beginning of everlasting Life: It is Glory begun in us; *he that believeth hath everlasting Life* (John 6:47.); that is to say, in the Seed or Beginning of it. And this Work shall be cherished and carried on by the same Hand that formed it, notwithstanding all Opposition from Sin within us, and from Satan, or the World without us; *being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Christ* (Philippians 1:6.. Those who are the Subjects of true Grace are at some Times admitted to sweet Communion and Fellowship with God and Christ: *Truly, says the Apostle John, our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ* (1 John 1:3.); which fills them with far greater Satisfaction, Joy and Pleasure, than can possibly arise from the Enjoyment Of all sublunary Things: *Thou hast put Joy and Gladness in my Heart more than in the Time that their Corn and their Wine increased* (Psalm 4:7.). The largest Affluence of the Things of this Life is not comparable to a Prospect of, and Communion with God through a Mediator.

(4.) Perfect and consummate Happiness consists in the eternal Enjoyment of God in Heaven, which it is the *Will of Christ, all that the Father hath given him should be brought to enjoy*; wherein are several Things to be observed.

[1.] The Removal of all that Darkness and Ignorance which at present attends the Understandings of the Saints. Through Divine Illumination they are now enabled to form some Ideas of heavenly Things, but their Conceptions thereof are low and imperfect, by reason of that Darkness which remains in them; hence says the Apostle, *We know in part, and prophesy in part*. Perhaps never had any Servant of God a more clear, distinct, and extensive Knowledge of Divine Mysteries, than this great Apostle had, if ever any were equal to him therein, and yet he acknowledges, that his Acquaintance with the *deep Things of God*, was but partial and imperfect, *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away* (1 Corinthians 13:9, 10.). The Excellency of the human Nature principally consists in its rational Powers, or a Capacity to form Conceptions of God, and what is good. Knowledge therefore, with suitable Affections, is our chiefest Glory. If Knowledge is to be esteemed more or less excellent, as it hath Objects lower, or more sublime, certainly that of which God is the Object must be accounted infinitely the Best. The greatest Skill in the Secrets of Nature, is to be valued only as it strikes us with a Reverence of its infinitely great Author, and induces us to love him,

who, it is manifest from his Works, is a Being of immense Goodness and unlimited Power. In this Philosophy is exceedingly defective; 'tis only the Revelation of Salvation to lost Creatures by Jesus Christ, that is suited to conquer the Rebellion of our Hearts; and in this there is a fuller Display of the Benignity, Wisdom, Power and Purity of God, than appears in the Works of Creation or Providence. For which Reason it may justly be concluded, that. the Knowledge of evangelical Doctrines far transcends in Excellence and Worth, the most extensive Acquaintance with natural Things; these are the refined Subjects about which the Faith of a Believer is now conversant, and which he shall eternally contemplate upon, and form perfect Conceptions of, in the blessed State above; then shall he *know even as he also is known* (1 Corinthians 13:12.), and see his Covenant-God *as he is* (1 John 3:2.): This is a Happiness which infinitely exceeds the most raised Ideas our present State admits of.

**[2.]** No Perverseness, or bias to Evil, will then attend the Will. Believer's are Persons possessed of Flesh as well as Spirit: Whilst they are in this mortal State, they *are bent to backsliding* (Hosea 11:7.); the *Law of their Members* too frequently prevails against that of *their Minds, and brings them into Captivity to the Law of Sin* (Romans 7:23.), which is in their Members. The Disquietude and Grief which the Deceitfulness, Strength, and Motions of Lusts within them, often occasion to their Souls, are not to be expressed, they can't but say, *O wretched Persons that we are, who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death* (Ver. 24.); they *groan within themselves*, and with longing Expectation *wait for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of their Body* (Romans 8:23.). In the future State they shall enjoy a perfect Freedom from all Impurity and Corruption. As soon as they put off their mortal Bodies their Souls will be perfected in Glory. When no sinful Thoughts will ever arise within them to their Disturbance and Grief, as now they do, even such Times when they most desire, to be delivered from them, the whole Heart Will then be intently fixed on God and Christ, and a holy Flame of Love to their dear Saviour, will be eternally glowing in their Breasts, who that considers the Happiness of such a State, can be without earnest Breathings after the Profession of it? May God, of his infinite Goodness, prepare us unworthy Creatures for it, and safely conduct us to it.

**[3.]** No Corruption will then remain in our Affections, which at present are very impure. Now we are apt *to set them on Things on the Earth* (Colossians 3:2.): Although we are convinced that invisible Objects infinitely better deserve our Regard, yet through the Imperfection that attends us, the Things of Time and sense deeply affect us, and engross far too large a Share of out Thoughts,

Desires and Affections but then we shall be entirely delivered from all such Rovings that break our Peace, and damp our spiritual Joys in this Life; no irregular Motions, or disorderly Passions, will then find any room in our Hearts, but we shall for ever be transported with rapturous Views of the dazzling Glories which shine in the Mediator's adorable Person.

**[4.]** No Discomposure of Mind will attend us in the heavenly State. Here our Souls are ruffled and perplexed by various Causes; by none so much, as by the Sin which dwells in us; but that we shall be completely delivered from, when we enter into that pure Place, where *nothing* is admitted *that defiles* (Revelation 21:27.). The Disappointments, Losses and Afflictions which occur in this State of Uncertainty, give us great and frequent Uneasiness; but when once we are arrived to the happy Shore of the other World, no Storms will ever any more at all arise upon us, or tempestuous Waves of Trouble overwhelm us. Now we are attended with Spiritual Darkness and Desertions, Clouds interpose between God and our Souls, and hide his Face from us; but when we are above we shall always behold him in his Son; nothing shall then intercept or prevent the Rays of his Favour from shining upon us. Those happy Regions above are all Serenity and Peace, and every joyful Inhabitant these, possesses eternal and undisturbed Rest and Tranquillity; all Sorrow is eternally banished from that Place; no Signs of Grief will ever appear in the Faces of those who are in Heaven, for *God will wipe away all Tears from their Eyes* (Revelation 7:17.; Revelation 21:4.).

**[5.]** That is a State of uninterrupted Communion with God. His spiritual Presence that is enjoyed by Believers here, is attended with an Agreeableness and Pleasure which rises far above our Expression; but yet it is infinitely below the Delight that springs from his immediate Presence in Heaven, where there is a Fulness of Joy, and at whose right Hand are Rivers of increasing Pleasures for evermore (Psalm 16:11.). The Fellowship which the Saints have with their heavenly Father in this State is often interrupted by Sin, Unbelief, and Temptations; but that which will subsist between God and them above, will not be broke by any of these Things: They Will be eternally swallowed up in the boundless Ocean of his everlasting Love.

**[6.]** Their Views of him will then be clear, permanent, and abiding. Now they see him by Faith, and beholding the Glory of the Lord, they are changed into the Same Image from Glory to Glory. But these Prospects are inconstant, seldom and short; then, as they will be clear, distinct and full, not as through a Glass darkly (2. Corinthians 3:18. 1 Corinthians 13:12.), so they will be invariable

and never ceasing. No small Part of our Happiness hereafter, will consist in viewing the Glory of our Redeemer, who is exalted at God's right Hand. *Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me, that they may behold my Glory* (John 17:24.). The Pleasure which will attend this View of our dear Saviour, as *crowned with Glory and Honour* (Hebrews 2:9.), far transcends our Comprehension at present. It must certainly be an exquisite Delight to the Saints, to see their Redeemer, who once wore a Crown of *Thorns* (Matthew 27:29.) for their sakes, have a never ceasing Crown of Glory on his Head; and to view him, who was once clothed with Shame on their Account, inverted with shining Robes of Majesty and Light.

[7.] They will receive inconceivable Glory from Christ. The Father *has given him Power over all Flesh, that he might give eternal Life to as many as are given him* (John 17:2.). He will always be the Medium of God's communicating Favours to us, which is greatly to his Honour. Our Glory will very much consist in a Conformity to Christ. It was this God resolved upon in Predestination; *He predestinated us to become conformed to the lineage of his Son* (Romans 8:29.) And this seems to comprehend the Utmost of that Glory which God designed to bring us to the Enjoyment of; the Greatness of which we are unable fully to conceive of or describe. Since the Happiness of the future State will be thus surprizingly great, it is not to be wondered at, that the Believer, in the Exercise of a lively Faith upon it, cries out, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly* (Revelation 22:20.). Persons appointed to this State tour be accounted really happy ones.

From this Petition of *Jabez* we may easily collect, that his Heart was chiefly set upon those Things which are of a solid and durable Nature; he prays for Blessings that out-last Time, and which would accompany him beyond the Grave. And thus it becomes us all, to pray for a View of our Discharge from Guilt, Security from the Law's Curse, and from eternal Vengeance, which our Sins render us justly deserving of; and also, that we may be meetened for the Enjoyment of God and Christ, and be safely brought to that Happiness, when with respect to us, Time shall be no more.

2ndly. His second Petition is, *and enlarge my Coast*. It is probable that his Possession or Inheritance was too strait and narrow, not equal to the Number of his Family, which drew this Supplication from him. This was the Care with the *Children of Dan*, who were obliged to enlarge their Coast by Violence, as we are informed, in the Book of *Joshua* (Joshua 19:47.). It appears by this Branch of this Prayer, that *Jabez* considered God as the Disposer of all Things, as

he who fixes *the Bounds of our Habitations*, as his Protector, and as his beneficent Benefactor.

**1.** He considered God as the Disposer of all Things. He framed the Universe, and gave Being to every Thing that exists; he *is the Creator of the Ends of the Earth* (Isaiah 40:28.). The whole Frame of Nature is dependent on him, and supported by him, and therefore every Thing is under his Direction, and at his Disposal: *The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein* (Psalm 23:1). The almighty and universal Creator, it is highly reasonable to suppose, has all Things under his Management and Influence. It is irrational to conceive, that he who made the World doth not govern it. Whatever God created doubtless he rules. Divine Providence is conversant about the minutest Parts Of the Creation; *a Sparrow, two of which are sold for a Farthing, doth not fall to the Ground without the Permission Of our heavenly Father* (Matthew 10:29.). We may therefore strongly conclude, that God exercises a special Care about, and Rule over Man, who is the Chief of the lower Creation. The Commencement of our Being, the Circumstances of our Life, whether they be high or low, the Time and Manner of our Death, are all under Divine Direction.

**2. Jabez** considered God as his Protector. His humble Application to God for the enlarging of his Coast, may direct us to conclude, that he was sensible of the Necessity of Divine Protection, to preserve him in a safe and quiet Possession of what was his present Property. If we are persuaded, that the Increase of our temporal Favours is from God, we cannot doubt of our holding whatever we may enjoy, by virtue of his governing Will. The peaceable Enjoyment of what Providence has made our own, is owing to the watchful Care, and powerful Protection of the great God; *Safety is of the Lord* (Proverbs 21:31.). He causes *the Needy*, that is to say, such as are poor, weak, and defenceless, *to lie down in safety* (Isaiah 14:30.). The Psalmist expresses his deep Sense of Divine Preservation in these Words, *I will both lay me down in Peace, and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety* (Psalm 4:8.).

**3.** He acknowledged the Lord to be his bountiful Benefactor. None can suitably apply to God for an Addition to their temporal Estate, but such who believe his universal Providence, and know that what they already enjoy, be it less or more, is the Beneficence of the supreme Being. A right Application to the Lord for such an Increase of our Substance as we apprehend to be necessary, carries in it a just Sense of all the Accommodations of Life, being his Gifts, and what we are wholly undeserving of Believers, when they humbly and spiritually look up to their heavenly Father, for the Communication

of what is needful for them, gratefully acknowledge it is he *who giveth them richly all Things to enjoy* (1 Timothy 6:17).

This Petition gives us a proper Occasion to enquire, whether it be lawful to desire more than we possess, if our necessary Wants are supplied? or, if having *daily Bread*, we may be justified in desiring more? I apprehend there are some Things, which, if they attend those Desires, render them absolutely unlawful; and that there are different Views Which may make such Desires strictly justifiable.

(1.) *Those Things which, I conceive, render these Desires unlawful,* are as follow:

[1.] A Diffidence and distrust of the continued Care of Divine Providence about us. It is too Commonly seen, that after Men have had a long Experience of the Goodness of God discovered in providing for them, they sink into a lamentable Distrust of the Continuance of his beneficent Regard to them, and foolishly propose to defend themselves from Penury, by advancing their Circumstances to such a height as may be thought to raise them to an Independance on Providence.; that is to say, they diligently attempt to lay up so much Store by them as they think will be sufficient to prevent their ever being Necessitous, Such a Conduct is exceedingly blameable; for, besides the Uncertainty of human Life, which ought to check all such anxious Desires, what Reason can be assigned, why we should scruple that the Providence which has suitably supplied us for thirty, forty, or fifty Years, will not take the same Care of us the short Time we may longer continue in Life? But oftentimes to such an excessive Pitch does this Temper arise in many, that they entirely lose all agreeable Relish of those Mercies they are favoured with, because they are disappointed in their Views of this low and diffident Kind. This covetous Disposition is very unbecoming those who profess Faith in Christ; it is what he severely censures, as the Effect of Unbelief, or of a weak Faith: *Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith? Therefore take no Thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed (for after all these Things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.* (Matthew 6:31, 32.) Having Food and Raiment we ought to be therewith content, and not distress our selves with Thoughts of what we have no just Reason to fear, viz. the want of Divine Beneficence towards us.

[2.] If Ambition and Pride give rise to, or cherish these Desires, we cannot acquit ourselves of Guilt in this matter. I imagine that Persons of ambitious and aspiring Views, are under a strong Temptation too eagerly to pursue the enriching of themselves; to

such the Want of Respect and Honour from others is intolerable, And as Riches frequently recommend a Man in the room of good Sense, strong Parts, Affability, and strict Probity, except to the *judicious Few.*; it is no wonder, that some Men are seen to labour after the amassing of Wealth together, who are not able to make Pretensions to Honour (but can't be easy without it) above what others in lower Life may claim by the Qualifications and Virtues which adorn their Mind, and Conduct. Men of this Cast cannot patiently bear, that any should exceed, if equal them, in Gaiety and Grandeur; but are far from imitating, such as are superior to them in the brighter Excellencies that beautify a Person.

[3.] If we aim at enriching our selves with a View to indulge a sensual Appetite, we are highly culpable. Ease, Luxury, and Wantonness, are Vices, that often captivate Persons of plentiful Fortunes; numerous Temptations attend those of a superior Rank, which such that are below them are not subject to. The Pleasure that arises from the Abundance of Wealth is far from over-balancing the many Dangers to which it exposes Men: A thorough Conviction of which caused. *Agur wisely* to decline seeking of it; he knew that the Corruption of our Nature prompts us to Pride and Insolence, if we are in elevated Circumstances, as it tempts. us to Actions fraudulent and, unjust when we are in the Reverse; which drew this Prayer from him, who, perhaps in this Particular is imitated but by few; *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, but feed me with Food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?. Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain* (Proverbs 30:8, 9.) If we desire to be rich, from an Inclination to gratify our carnal Affections, Providence is infinitely kind in denying us what would be unspeakably to our Disadvantage: *Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your Lusts* (James 4:3.)

[4.] When our Endeavours this Way are accompanied with oppressive Designs towards others, we are guilty of a very great Evil. Oppression is a cruel and inhuman Vice; but many whose circumstances enable them to it, seldom discover the Want of an inclination to practise it. *Do not rich Men oppress you* (James 2:6.)? *Says the Apostle James.* The Heart of Man is so abominably wicked, as to abuse that to the Detriment of others, which he ought to improve to their Assistance and Advantage. *But thine eyes and thine Heart are not but for thy Covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood; and for Oppression, and for violence to do it.* (Jeremiah 22:17.) Too many, whose Ability renders them capable of relieving the Distressed and Necessitous, are so far from Christian Generosity, as to increase the Poverty of their Dependants, by

abating them of their Wages, without any manner of Necessity, but merely from an insatiable Desire after adding to their own Wealth. I can't tell, whether the Frequency of this may not have so far blinded the Minds of some Men, as to make them think it no Crime: If any Check is given by the Conscience for such a Conduct, it is presently silenced by this pitiful and shameless Excuse, *If I do it not others Will.* It would be well if those Words were seriously considered by such, *I will be a swift Witness against those that oppress the Hireling in his Wages* (Malachi 3:5.). Let not any think to join with others in Sin, and imagine that they shall not share with them in the Punishment.

If any of these Things attend our Desires of enlarging our Treasure, those Desires proceed from a low and base Principle.

(2.) *There are some very justifiable Reasons that may be mentioned in favour of such Desires,* and which sufficiently defend us in cherishing of them.

[1.] That we may be able to assist others who are in want. This is a Duty incumbent upon us all; we are required *to do good to all Men, especially to them who are of the Household of Faith* (Galatians 6:10.). In this we ought to imitate the Beneficence of our heavenly Father, who causes *his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good; and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust* (Matthew 6:45.). Now, if we use our Diligence to render our selves capable of this Charity and Benevolence, it is to our Commendation.; to this we are, directed, *Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the Thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth* (Ephesians 4:28.) We are under Obligation to be. industrious, with a View to the Service of our Fellow-Creatures, but more especially, that we may enable our selves to relieve poor and distressed Saints. As in all other Things; so in this, perhaps our treacherous Hearts too frequently deceive us; We may sometimes think, that we would be extensively charitable, if our Circumstances were but once advanced to such a Height; an eager Desire of which holds our hand, and prevents our present Liberality; and if, so, we may be assured, that our Desire of encreasing our Stock is not for the sake of others, but wholly for our selves; or, that it is a selfish Principle, which governs us.

[2.] It is lawful, to desire an Increase of our Substance, with a View to our Improvement in useful Knowledge. There is a great Variety of Subjects that well deserve Your diligent Study, in order to any considerable Acquaintance with which such Helps are necessary, that cannot be obtained without great Expence; and therefore Persons in low Circumstances, though they may have an excellent

Genius, or their Intellectuals maybe such as fit them for sublime Studies, yet their Situation of Affairs does not furnish them with suitable Opportunities, and necessary Advantages, for that Improvement of which they are capable. In the Opinion of *Solomon*, an Advancement in Knowledge is far preferable to the Increase of Riches. *How much better is it to get Wisdom than Gold; and to get Understanding rather to be chosen than Silver* (Proverbs 16:16.). The Works of Nature are very worthy of our diligent Enquiries, for those Discoveries Which are to be made of the Order, Dependance, Beauty, and Harmony of natural Things, may justly lead us to adore the great Creator, whose infinite Wisdom and Power will visibly appear to us in all our Disquisitions of this kind. But the gracious Design of the Salvation of Sinners, or evangelical Mysteries, best deserve our assiduous Studies, because the Divine Perfections are more eminently displayed therein, and our dearest Interest is most nearly concerned in our Acquaintance with those heavenly Things. Now it is lawful to desire an Increase of our temporal Substance, in order to capacitate us for Improvement (by obtaining of necessary Helps) in such valuable Knowledge.

[3.] We may lawfully desire an Enlargement of our Treasure, out of a Regard to the Interest of Religion: The Promotion of Christ's Kingdom, and the Propagation of his Gospel, challenge our warmest Zeal. If we have a deep Sense of the many Obligations we are under to Christ, we shall certainly be influenced to contribute all we can to the Support and Spreading of his Cause in the World: We cannot neglect, and be indifferent towards his Interest, without involving our selves in Guilt. Besides, a proper use of what Providence entrusts us with, is very likely to be attended with a Blessing. It is to be questioned, whether Liberality tends to impoverish us, but we are assured, that *to withhold more than is meet tends to Poverty* (Proverbs 11:24.). *Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the First-Fruits of all thine Increase, so shall thy Barns be filled with new Wine* (Chap. 3:9, 10.). Now, though these Views may justify us, in desiring an Addition to our temporal Riches, yet our Application to God for it ought to be with entire Submission to his Will, as considering, that he knows what is most proper for us, and best understands how we should use what we might be entrusted with, For my Part, I freely confess, that I apprehend Riches are no farther desirable than as they subserve these valuable Ends mentioned; and what Account those will be able to give hereafter, who are possessed of them, and do not improve them to these Purposes, they will do well seriously to consider. I imagine it must be much such a one as that Servant gave, who *laid up his Pound in a Napkin* (Luke 19:20.), and neglected to occupy it.

**3dly.** The third Branch of this Prayer is, *and, That thine Hand might be with me*. By the Hand of God may be intended his powerful Grace; as it is in these Words, *The Hand of the Lord was with them, and a great Number* ;21.); which God promises to turn upon his People :Acts 11 (*believed and I will turn mine Hand upon the little ones* (Zechariah 13:7.). These Words are expressive of God's gracious and effectual Influence in and upon his Saints. *Jabez* was sensible that this was necessary to his Assistance, Protection, Guidance, and Consolation, and therefore intreats .that he might be favoured therewith

**1.** The Hand of God's Love and Favour is necessary to our Aid and Assistance. We are unable to excite, or put into Exercise, and maintain the Vigor of those Graces, that are formed in us, which yet are very needful to the Comfort and Joy of Our Souls. Our spiritual Vivacity and Liveliness is wholly dependant on Christ, *with whom is the Fountain of Life* (Psalm 36:9.). As Branches in the natural Vine cannot bear Fruit without a continued Communication of Nourishment from it, for Believers, who are Branches of Christ, *the true Vine*, cannot bring forth any spiritual Fruit to God's Glory, unless they have a constant Supply of Grace from him; *without me ye can do nothing* (John 15:5.). Again, they are unequal to a spiritual Performance of any Duty, without Divine Assistance: Their religious Exercises are gone through in a very cold, dull, and heavy Manner; if heavenly Influences are with-held, a Sense of which drew this Request from the Church, *Draw me* (Cant. 1:4.). Various Temptations attend the Saints; and their corrupt Part is very ready to comply therewith. Nor are they, of themselves, able to repel the Force of the least which may befall them. All our Ability to withstand Satan's urgent Solicitations to Evil is derived from Christ, who *is our Strength*, as well as *Righteousness* (Isaiah 45:25.). A Multitude of Snares surround us in this sinful World, which is, as it were, a *Land of Deserts and Pits* (Jeremiah 2:6.); and therefore super-natural Assistance is absolutely requisite to our comfortable Walking, where we can't but be sensible that manifold Difficulties and Dangers are before us. Besides, many Afflictions seize upon us while we are here, which are *not joyous but grievous* (Hebrews 12:13.), though they yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness in the End. How necessary it is that Christ's *left Hand* should be under our *Head* (Song of Solomon 2:6.), to keep us from sinking, those fully know, over whom the surging Waves of deep Distresses have rolled.

**2.** Omnipotent Grace is necessarily required to our Protection. It is not to be imagined, that we are furnished with a Power sufficient to defend our selves against the violent Assaults of that *roaring Lion*, Satan, *who walketh about, reeking whom he may devour* (1 Peter

1:8.). The treacherous and powerful Enemies which are within our own Breasts would certainly prevail against us, and involve us in endless Destruction, if Divine Power did not frond engaged for our Defence. Our Ruin would be inevitable, if Christ was not as well a *Shield* to defend us as a *Sun* (Psalm 84:11.) to enlighten us: So great is our Danger, which arises from the *Deceit and Power* of Sin in our Hearts. The Number, Malice, and Rage of the Saints Adversaries in the World, would strike them with the greatest consternation were they left to defend themselves; it is only the Knowledge of their having an impregnable Place of Defence to retreat to in all Dangers; which bears up their Courage and Fortitude of Mind. *The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower; the Righteous runneth into it and is safe* (Proverbs 18:10.). *It is by the Power of God* alone that they are kept through Faith unto Salvation (1 Peter 1:5.).

3. The *Skilfulness of God's Hand* (Psalm 78:72.) is very heedful to our *Guidance* and Direction. We are full as defective in Wisdom as in Strength; *The Way of Man is not in him self; it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps* (Jeremiah 10:23.). We are often at as great a Loss how to conduct our selves under difficult Circumstances, as we are unable to act the Part which becomes us; hence the Psalmist entirely depended on Direction from above; *Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel* (Psalm 73:24.). The true Knowledge of what is our Duty is a Gift from Heaven, as well as the Ability to perform it, *Teach me to do thy Will*, is a Petition suitable to the Condition of us all. The Path in which we should walk is frequently out of our View; we know not where or how to take one Step. So far as our Actions are agreeable to the Character of good Men they are directed by God; *the Steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord* (Psalm 153:10.). We should turn aside, and eternally wander, if a gracious God did not say to us, when we *decline to the right Hand, or to the left, this is the Way, walk ye in it* (Psalm 37:23.).

4. The kind Influences of God upon us are necessary to our Consolation. All our spiritual Comfort takes its Rise from rich Grace, and is effected by the *good Hand of God upon us* Nehemiah 2:8.: Hence the Lord is stiled the *God of Consolation* (Romans 15:5.). Believers never have any solid Peace and Joy but when they are favoured with the Smiles of their heavenly Father: He only can *comfort them* when they are *cast down* (2 Corinthians 7:6. This he graciously promises to do for them, *As one whom his Mother comforteth so will I comfort you* (Isaiah 66:13). And this his free Promise he effectually makes good, by shewing to them the *Immutability of his Counsel*, concerning their Salvation, which he has *confirmed by an Oath, That by two immutable Things, wherein it*

is *impossible for him to lye*, they *might have a strong Consolation* (Hebrews 6:17, 18.). Through a Contraction of Guilt they sometimes are deprived of their spiritual Joys, their Graces grow languid, and their Hearts are exceedingly troubled: This was *David's Case*, when he thus expressed himself to his God, *Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation* (Psalm 51:12.) What he earnestly desired on his own Account, God will indulge his distressed Children with, notwithstanding their Backslidings from him. *I have seen his Ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore Comforts to him, and to his Mourners* (Isaiah 57:18.)

4thly. *Jabez* prays to be kept from Evil: *And that thou wouldest keep me from Evil*. He urges a Reason for this Petition, it is this, *That it may not grieve me*. I shall,

**1.** Consider the *Request*.

**2.** Observe the Argument or *Reason* he pleads for obtaining the Favour he asked.

**1.** I am to consider the Request, which is, *And that thou wouldest keep me from Evil* In this Branch of his Prayer are three Things to be enquired into.

(1.) What is designed by Evil. (2.) What is supposed by *Jabez* his applying to God to be kept from it. (3.) How the Lord keeps his People from Evil.

(1.) Evil sometimes designs Penalty; thus in these Words, *I will bring Evil upon them which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me I will not hearken unto them* (Jeremiah 11:11.). In other Places it intends Affliction; as in these Words, *and comforted him over all the Evil, i.e. Affliction that the Lord had brought upon him* (Job. 42:11.). All Punishment is Affliction; but all Affliction is not Penalty. *Job's* Affliction had nothing of a penal Nature in it. Evil is elsewhere taken for Sin; as here, *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil* (Psalm 97:10.), *i.e. Sin*. This I apprehend to be principally designed at least; in this Place, under our Consideration. It is not improbable but *Jabez* might have in View Afflictions, and desire to be delivered from them, which are grievous in their Nature. But I imagine it was Sin that he chiefly had Respect to, and was desirous of being kept from. A very evil Thing it is.

[1.] It is Evil in its Nature. It is contrary to God; *It's the abominable Thing that he hates* (Jere miah 44:4.). It is a Transgression of the Divine Law; *Whosoever committeth Sin*, says the Apostle *John*, *transgresseth also the Law, for Sin is the Transgression of the Law*

(John 3:4.). In sinning we act in direct Opposition to the Will of God, despise his Authority, and strike at his Government; who therefore will ever be able fully to describe the disagreeable Nature of this hideous Monster?

[2.] Since Sin is thus vile in its Nature it can't be imagined to be good in its Effects. The Consequences arising from it have been fatal to all chargeable with it. Man's Apostasy from God, or his first Breach of the Law, involved us all in Misery and Woe. By that Sin the Rectitude and Purity of our Nature was lost, and we are become polluted, and prone to all Iniquity. Besides, it is Sin that exposes us to the Curse and Condemnation of the Law, and renders us liable to God's eternal Vengeance; *for which Things sake* (i.e. the Lusts mentioned above) *cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience* (Colossians 3:6.). That is the cursed Fountain from which all penal Evils spring here, and from whence everlasting Destruction will arise hereafter; eternal *Death is the Wages* (Romans 6:23.) of it, or that is properly demerited by it: Its Nature therefore must be inconceivably vile and abominable.

(2.) *Jabez* having a proper Sense of the evil and odious Nature of Sin, applies to the Lord to be kept from it. Thus all Believers do; as *David*, who expresses himself after this Manner, *Cleanse thou me from secret Faults; keep back thy Servant also from presumptuous Sins, let them not bare Dominion over me* (Psalm 19:13.). Christ gives us Advice to this in his Directory for Prayer, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil* (Matthew 6:13.). The Necessity of a Dependance on God for Preservation from the Commission of Sin, thus appears.

[1.] Sin dwells in every Believer. 'Tis true, the Saints are born from above (John 1:8.), or a Principle of Holiness is implanted in them (2 Timothy 1:9.), which influences them to desire a perfect Conformity to Christ; but their Experience sufficiently convinces them, that it is far from being attainable in this Life: Whoever shall conceit that he hath attained to Perfection already, will give but too evident a Proof of his being under a dreadful *Delusion*; *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us* (John 1:13.). There is a carnal and fleshly, as well as a spiritual Part in every Child of God; contrary and jarring Principles reside in his Breast; *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other* (Galatians 5:17.), According to the carnal Part he is *bent to Backsliding* (Hosea 11:7.): The natural Turn and Biass of his Will is to Evil; hence the Apostle thus complains, *In me (that is in my Flesh) dwelleth no good Thing* (Romans 7:23.). The Danger we are in of being overcome by the Deceitfulness and Power of indwelling Corruption,

is far greater than many, who would be esteemed Christians, seem to be aware of. It is difficult to determine, whether the Deceit, or the Strength of Sin, is the greatest. Its Deceitfulness appears many Ways. It often hides the Vitiosity and sad Consequences of a sinful Action, to which the Will is solicited to yield, and endeavours to keep the Thoughts, wholly exercised about the Pleasures, or imaginary Advantages that will attend it: It offers many Things to extenuate the Nature of a Crime, and strongly insists upon it, that there cannot be any great Harm in indulging such a particular Desire that may arise in the Soul; that at least some Advances may be made towards what our carnal Affections are desirous of, without the Contraction of any great Guilt. Thus by gradual and slow Steps, if the Grace of God doth not prevent, it gains considerable Ground in our Hearts. The Power and Prevalence of it is equal to its Treachery; this the Apostle sets forth by calling it *a Law*, and *a Law that wars against the Law of the Mind*; and, as he observes, not without Success, for *it brings us into Captivity* (Romans 7:21-23.); or prevails against us, which, if we duly consider, we must allow it is highly necessary for us, earnestly to pray to God, to be kept from Evil.

[2.] We are liable to a great Variety of Temptations. Satan is an unwearied Adversary, and hath had long Experience in tempting of Men; whence it is reasonable to conclude, that he may be capable of guessing, what our Constitutions principally incline us to, or what Temptations are most likely to prevail with us: It is not to be questioned, but he diligently considers our Age, Circumstances in Life, natural Inclinations, and the different Occasions to Sin which may turn up, and thereby takes us at great Disadvantages, and without a *Standard is lift up against him* we are carried away as with an impetuous and violent *Flood* (Isaiah 59:19.) The Craft of this *old Serpent* (Revelation 12:9.), in soliciting us to the Commission of Evil, is as great as the Sting, that attends his accusing us of those Sins which we have committed. His Subtlety is not unequal to his Poison, and therefore it becomes us to depend on Christ for Preservation from, and Aid under his Temptations, who hath *bruised his Head* (Genesis 3:15.) , and Will *shortly bruise him under our Feet* (Romans 16:20.).

[3.] We are unable to check and subdue the Motions of Evil in our Hearts, or to withstand Temptations. A Person may at some Times think of a Crime with the greatest Detestation, and imagine himself to be Proof against all Enticements to it, and say as *Hazael* did, *Am I a Dog that I should do this great Thing, i.e. Evil* (2 Kings 8:13.), and yet be prevailed on to commit it. *Peter* imagined, that he should much rather choose Death than deny his Master; but not

withstanding his Abhorrence of so vile a Fact, he became guilty of it, with dreadful Aggravations attending it. And why we should suppose, that we are furnished with an Ability sufficient to guard and defend us, in a Time of Temptation, any more than that Servant of Christ was, I know not, If we conceit that there is no Danger of our committing any Evil, because at present our Souls rise up against it, let us not be too confident, but be humble, knowing that our Hearts are *deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked* (Jeremiah 17:9.), left the Lord leave us to our selves, to check our Vanity, as he did *Hezekiah*, who after a Recovery from a threatening Sickness, was guilty of very great Pride and Vain-Glory, upon which It is said, *That God left him, to try him, and that he might know all that was in his Heart* (2 Chronicles 32:31.). He was a good Man, but entertain'd either too high an Opinion of the Exactness of his former Conduct, or cherished improper Thoughts concerning his own Strength; or it may be both, and therefore God permitted him to fall, to humble and abase him, by his Grace, in recovering of him from his Sin. If the Lord saw it meet, that a humble *Paul, who thought himself less than the least of all Saints* (Ephesians 3:8.), should be grieved with a *Thorn in his Flesh, or be buffeted by a Messenger from Satan, left he should be exalted above Measure* (2 Corinthians 12:7.); certainly we cannot think too meanly of our selves, nor have too strict a Dependance on Divine Grace, to keep us from Evil, to which we are naturally inclined, and are often strongly tempted to commit. We never walk so rarely as when we Walk humbly. May the Lord therefore enable us to *watch*, and to join Prayer to Watchfulness, which is no less necessary; *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation* (Matthew 26:41.).

(3.) God keeps his People from falling into the Commission of gross Evils. Thus, [1.] By maintaining in their Souls a proper Sense of Sin. If an Apprehension of the vile Nature of Sin declines in us, we are in great Danger of being overcome by it. Slight Thoughts concerning a Crime certainly pave the Way for the Commission of it, be it what it will. If once our Conscience is so far overcome by the Strength of our Passions, as to abate of its Testimony against any particular Vice, nothing can possibly prevent our thinking into it, but special and seasonable Influences of Divine Grace, to awaken the Conscience out of that Lethargy Sin has thrown it into; for it is certain we are not far from the Perpetration of that Evil, how great soever it may be. It is only at such a Time that we make a proper Resistance against Sin, in which we say as *Joseph* did, *How can we do this great Wickedness and sin against God* (Genesis 39:9.).

[2.] By keeping up a just Sense of our own Weakness in our Hearts. If once we so far forget our selves, as to imagine that we shall be

able to stand in a Time of Temptation, without a strict Dependance on Christ for Strength, it is very much if we do not make bold, even with Occasions to Sin; for presuming on our own Ability, naturally tends to takes us off from necessary Caution, and therefore at is a *Miracle* of Grace, if we do not perpetrate the Evil which we begin to make Advances towards; this, perhaps, may have been the Case with some, but they have been preserved, yet it can hardly be supposed, without the Contraction of a great *Degree of Guilt*; and they have infinite Cause of Thankfulness, that they were not fully drawn on to the *Finishing of Sin* (James 1:15.). An humble Reliance on Christ for Preservation from Evil, directs us to avoid all Occasions to Sin, as well as best fortifies us against all Temptations to it. Let us therefore say with the Psalmist, *I will go in the Strength of the Lord* (Psalm 71:16.); and take the Advice which the Apostle gave to *Timothy*, *Thou, therefore, my Son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus* (2 Timothy 2:1.).

[3.] Abiding Thoughts of our Union with Christ directly tend to keep us from sinning. The Relation in which we stand to him is our greatest Honour, and the inn-moveable Foundation of our Security. Christ is our Head, and we are his Members; *He is the Head of the Body the Church* (Colossians 1:18.); and we are said *to be Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones* (Ephesians 5:20.); which the Apostle improves as an Argument to Purity and Charity of Life, *Shall I then take the Members of Christ and make them the Members of an Harlot, God forbid* (1 Corinthians 6:15.). It is exceeding disagreeable in a Member of Christ to act in direct Opposition to his Will; he is the Husband of the Church, from hence her Duty is inferrable, as much as her Dignity. This conjugal Relation of Believers to Christ, plainly suggests the great Obligations they are under to love, submit to, and reverence him; according to the Strength of their Faith in this Union, they will certainly be desirous of action agreeable to his Command.

**2.** I proceed to consider the Reason which *Jabez* renders of this his Petition; which is, *That it may not grieve me*. Sin is a certain Occasion of Grief sooner or later; however bold Men may make with it now, they will undoubtedly find it (if rich Grace prevent not) to be the Cause of inexpressible and eternal Anguish and Sorrow. The Grief arising from it here, is either legal or evangelical.

**(1.)** It is the Occasion of legal Sorrow, which discovers it self in these two Things.

**[1.]** A Dread of God's Anger; something of which may frequently attend a Believer; thus *Asaph* informs us, that he *remember'd God and was troubled* (Psalm 77:5.). An Apprehension of God's

immense Knowledge, infinite Purity, and omnipotent Power, when attended with a Sense of our own Guilt, raises the greatest Confusion, and deepest Distress in our Minds; for hence we collect, that he is fully acquainted with all our Disobedience to him; that as Sin is contrary to his pure Nature, he cannot but hate it; and as his Power is boundless, to our increasing Sorrow, we can't but be sensible that he is able to inflict upon us the Punishment we deserve; that it is impossible we should screen our selves from Justice before such a Judge; let not any *be deceived, for God is not mocked* (Galatians 6:7.).

[2.] A Departure from God. Guilt drives Men from making an Application to him, who alone can save them. Thus when *Adam* had sinned, and saw his *Nakedness*, or that he had lost the Rectitude of his Nature; and that he had, by his Transgression, exposed himself to the just Displeasure of his Creator, he was so far from humbly prostrating himself before him, acknowledging his Guilt, and asking of Pardon, that he turns his Back upon him; nor. would he ever have returned, if God had not fought him (Genesis 3:8-10.). A Sense of Guilt forces all his Posterity to act such a Part, without a View of Mercy.

These Things attend a legal Sorrow, or Grief arising from Sin and Guilt, which it is to be feared too many take to be Repentance *Unto Life*.

(2.) There is an evangelical Grief on account of sin, which the Grace of God produces in Believers, by enabling them to act Faith on a crucified Jesus;

*They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn, as a Man mourns for his only Son; and be in Bitterness for him, as one is in Bitterness for his First-born* (Zechariah 12:10.). Many Considerations maintain the Flow of this kind and ingenuous Sorrow in the Heart of a Believer. As,

[1.] That Sin is committed against a gracious God and Father. The Guilt of those Sins is highly aggravated which are committed after Discoveries of Grace and Mercy, which when duly weighed by the Saints, it troubles them exceedingly to think, that they have so often offended the Lord, after Intimations of his Love have been given to their Souls. With deep Humility, and flowing Grief, they acknowledge their Unworthiness, as did the *Prodigal*, saying, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee* (Luke 15:18.). Thus *David* seems to be pierced very much, with the Consideration of his having sinned against a God of infinite Mercy;

*According to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Transgressions* (Psalm 51:10.). God's great Mercy was the only Foundation of his Hope of Pardon; and the Sense he had of sinning, against such a God went very near him; *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy sight* (Ver. 4.). There is this great Difference between legal and evangelical Sorrow for Sin, the former arises from an Apprehension and Dread of God's Anger; the latter springs from the Exercise of Faith on his infinite Grace and Goodness.

[2.] When a Believer considers that he has sinned against a kind and gracious Redeemer, a large Vent is given to this Gospel-Sorrow. It was a Sense of Christ's Love which *Peter* had, that melted him into Tears: Immediately upon his great and dreadful Fall, he received a Look of Love from his suffering Saviour; *the Lord turned and looked upon Peter* (Luke 22:61.); this caused him to depart from those vile Persons who were the Occasion of his Sin, and to seek a private Place where he might give free Vent to his swelling Grief; *he went out and wept bitterly* (Matthew 26:75.). Could you over-hear a Believer in his private Devotion, when under a broken Sense of his Guilt, I imagine you would find him to confess and mourn over it much, after this Manner. How exceedingly vile and ungrateful is my Heart, which has led me to the Commission of Sin, although I have seen that to be the meritorious Cause of all those dolorous and cruel Sufferings. that my dearest Saviour underwent upon my Account, to deliver me from deserved Vengeance? O wretched Ingratitude that I have been guilty of, to sin against thee my precious Redeemer, who didst shed thy Blood, *and make thy Soul an Offering for my Sin.* (Isaiah 53:10.)! The Aggravations that attend my Guilt arising from hence, are far beyond my Expression or Conception; however, still permit me to prostrate my self at thy Feet, and humbly hope in thy Merits for Pardon, and depend on thy Grace for the Destruction, of those abominable Lusts that dwell, in my Heart. I greatly long for the entire Extirpation of them, that I might sin against thee no more, to the Grief of my Soul, nor to thy Dishonour.

[3.] The Saints are very much troubled that they have grieved the Holy Spirit by their Sin: It was by him that they were convinced of their natural Corruption and Danger, their Need of Christ, and of his Suitableness as a Saviour; by his Influences were they enabled to hope in him, and to commit the Keeping of their Souls to him. Also as a Comforter and Witness he gave them an Evidence of their Interest in Christ, and of their being Sons to God; *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children Of God* (Romans 8:16.). All which being considered by a Believer, When under a Sense of his Guilt, inexpressibly wounds him, because he

clearly apprehends that he has grieved the Holy Spirit, by whom he has *been sealed to the Day of Redemption* (Ephesians 4:30).

[4.] The Reproach that is brought upon Religion, by the unbecoming Conduct of a Believer, is the Occasion of deep Distress to his Soul. A virtuous Life is an Ornament to the Gospel which we profess to believe, and justifies the Doctrine of Grace from the foul Aspersions that are thrown upon it, by such as are opposite to it on the contrary, an irregular Conduct gives Occasion to those, who are not Favourers of that Doctrine, to load it with Calumny and Odium. When any are suffered, through the Strength of disorderly Passions, and powerful Temptations, to fall, who have tasted the Sweetness of those Doctrines, they are exceedingly troubled that the Truths and Interest of Christ should be reproached through their Sin and Folly.

[5.] That Darkness, which follows upon the Commission of Sin, in the Soul of a Believer, is very grieving to him. It is the Happiness of the Saints that they are inseparably interested in the Divine Favour; that *nothing shall be able to separate them from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus* (Romans 7:38, 39.); and that they are indissolubly united with Christ. For their eternal Security is wholly dependent thereupon. But tho' their Interest in the favourable Regard and Love of God can never be lost, yet the Sense and Apprehension of that Interest may be interrupted by Sin for a Time. Now, as the Enjoyment of the Divine Presence is the chiefest Joy of the Saints: When their Guilt separates God and them, with respect to present and gracious Communion (Isaiah 59:2.); or when it veils his Face, and hides the Light of his Countenance from them, and they are covered with Clouds and Darkness; great Sorrow fills their Hearts; *Weeping endures for such a Night* (Psalm 30:5.), of black and melancholy Deserion, as David found by Experience, which gave rise to this Petition of his, at the Time in which he confessed his Guilt, *Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit* (Psalm 51:12.).

[6.] The Weakness which the Commission of Sin occasions to the Graces of the Saints, is the Cause of great Distress to their Souls. The Work of Grace upon the Heart of a Believer cannot, shall not be destroyed, but be carried on *until the Day of Christ* (Philippians 1:6.); notwithstanding he is liable to spiritual Decays, with respect to the Exercise of Grace, and the Comfort he may have enjoyed. Sin naturally tends to interrupt the Exercise of Faith, to cool our Love, and to abate the Vigor of our Hope, as, I imagine, must be evident to every true Christian. The Irreverence which the Church at Corinth was guilty of, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, was much to their disadvantage; *their coming together was not for the better but for the worse* (1 Corinthians 11:17.); on Account thereof many

among them were weak and sickly, and many slept (1 Corinthians 11:30.). Which Words either intend bodily Indisposition and Death, or spiritual Weakness, Disorder, and slumbering, drowsy Frames. I see no Inconvenience to attend the latter Sense. Since such Consequences follow upon Sin, certainly it becomes us, as we regard the Comfort of our own Souls, and the Credit of Religion, to pray, that we may be kept from it, that it may not grieve us.

But to proceed,

**III. Jabez received a gracious Answer; God granted unto him that which he requested. The Lord will hear and answer the Prayers of his People. The Church expresses her Faith in this Matter thus; My God will hear me. Here I shall observe,**

**First.** That several Things may serve to encourage us to believe, that we shall be favourably regarded in our Petitions at the Divine Throne.

**Secondly.** The Nature of God's answers,

**Thirdly.** That we should not conclude the Lord doth not regard us, if we are not speedily answered.

**First.** To begin with the first, several Things may serve to encourage us to believe, that we shall be favourably regarded in our Petitions at the Divine Throne.

**1.** The special Love and Grace of God, The Saints are interested in the peculiar Favour of the most High; for having *loved them with an everlasting Love, therefore with Loving-kindness be draws them* (Jeremiah 31:3.), His Love to them is such, that it has prevailed with him to give his Son to them, and for them (Isaiah 9:6; John 3:16.), which was the greatest Gift that could be bestowed upon the Saints; from whence the Apostle concludes, that God will communicate all Things needful to us: *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, bow shall he not with him also freely give us all Things* (Romans 8:32.)? We are easily persuaded to grant a Favour to a Person for whom we have a particular Respect; and much more may it be thought, that the Lord, who bears an infinite Love to his People, will hear their humble Supplications to him, and give the Blessings which they shall ask.

**2.** Their Relation to God may justly be improved as an Argument that he will *regard their Prayer*: They are his Children, and the Objects of his tenderest: Compassion. An earthly Parent, who is not become inhuman, will not be unmindful of the Petitions of his Child, when in Distress, but will give Relief if he is able; then certainly, much more, our heavenly Father will not turn a deaf Ear to our

Cries, and refuse to grant us the necessary Favours we crave at his Hand.

**3.** Divine Promise's may assist our Faith in this Thing. God calls upon us to attend to this Duty of Prayer, and promises to hear us; *Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you* (Matthew 7:7.). We ought to credit the Word of God, and upon a firm Persuasion of the Stability of his Promises of this kind, come *boldly* to the Throne of his Grace, *that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in Time of need* (Hebrews 4:16.).

**4.** The Glory of God himself is concerned in communicating those spiritual Favours to us for which we ask, as well as the Consolation of our Souls. The Happiness of the Saints is inseparably connected with Divine Honour, which is a wonderful Support to their Faith; for hence they may safely conclude upon their eternal Security. The Christian's Fruitfulness is to the Glory of his God: *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit* (John 15:8.). But the Commission of Sin is to his Dishonour; and therefore we have sufficient Ground to hope, that the *Lord will hear our Voice, and that his Ears will be attentive to the Voice of our Supplications* (Psalm 130:2.), when we pray for an increase of Grace, and the subduing of our Iniquity.

**5.** The spiritual Prayers of the Saints are directed by the Holy Spirit, as has been already observed; it is he who *makes Intercession for us* with unutterable *Groanings*, and this agreeable to the will of God (Romans 8:25, 26.). Now it may be justly concluded, that the Lord will attend to those Cries of his People which he influences them to, and answer those Prayers in his own Way and Time that his Spirit enables them to put up to him.

**6.** God has promised to give those spiritual Blessings to his People which they pray to him for. It is impossible that our Prayers should exceed, or equal Divine Promises. God hath engaged to pardon our Guilt, to justify our Persons, to support and defend us, and to thoroughly sanctify and cleanse us: *From all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols, will I cleanse you* (Ezekiel 36:25.). *He will gave Grace and Glory; no good Thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly* (Psalm 134:11.): More than which could not be promised, nor ever can be enjoyed; and therefore we have no Occasion to imagine, that our Petitions of a spiritual Kind will not be answered, because of their great Extent, for the Compass of our Prayers is not equal to that of the Divine Promises.

**7.** Christ presents our Supplications to *God*, which in themselves are very mean, but they find Acceptance through him; he is the

Intercessor of the Saints at God's right Hand, and he strengthens their Petitions to him, by praying for them, and offering up their Prayers to the Father, as perfumed with the sweet *Incense* of his prevalent Intercession; and thus they come up before God with Approbation, which affords sufficient Ground of Encouragement to believe, that we shall receive Answers of Peace from him, although we *chatter but as a Crane, or a Swallow* (Isaiah 38:14.) when we pray unto him.

**Secondly.** Some Things may be observed concerning the Nature of those Answers, which God gives to our Prayers.

**1.** Sometimes he answers very speedily and quick; thus he did *Daniel, And whiles I was speaking in Prayer, the Man Gabriel talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee Skill and Understanding; at the Beginning of thy Supplications the Commandment came forth* (Daniel 9:21, 22, 23.). As soon as this Man of God began to pray to the Lord, a Commission was given to the Angel *Gabriel* to go and comfort him, and inform him of the favourable Designs he had about his People the *Jews*, who were then in Captivity, The Psalmist desired, and was favoured with a speedy Answer to his Prayer from God, *in the Day when I call, answer me speedily* (Psalm 102:2.) *In the Day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with Strength in my Soul* (Psalm 138:3.)

**2.** It is the Pleasure of the Lord, at some Seasons, to defer giving us an Answer to our Prayers: We may call, and not be sensible that we are regarded, for a considerable Time; this was the Case with the Church: Says she; speaking of her *Beloved, I sought him, but I found him not; I called him, but he gave me no Answer* (Song of Solomon 5:6.); which was a just Reproof for her ill Treatment of him. God's acting thus towards the Church, caused her bitterly to complain elsewhere, *When I cry, and shout, he shutteth out my Prayer: Thou hast covered thy self with a Cloud, that our Prayers should not pass through* (Lamentations 3:8-44.). When God thus delays to answer our Petitions, let us not imagine that he is regardless of them, since he has acted in this Manner by his Saints heretofore, nor think of neglecting to call upon him, but as enabled, *wait patiently for him* (Psalm 40:1.): *The Vision may. be for an appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak, it shall not lye; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry* (Habakkuk 2:3.). God defers his Answer to exercise the Faith, Hope, and Patience, of his People.

**3.** In some Instance the Lord's Answers to the Saints Prayers have been direct and full: Thus *David* was. not only immediately, but fully answered, or God granted him that very Favour he asked. He

had been guilty of Sin in numbering the People, and God, to shew his Resentment, sent the Pestilence among them, which swept away Seventy Thousand, and taught *David*, that the vast Multitude of his Subjects might soon be reduced to a very small Number; upon this he confesses his Sin, and earnestly intreats of the Lord, to put a Stop to the Raging of the Plague, and is answered according to his Desire (1 Chronicles 21:28).

**4.** Some Divine Answers to the Prayers of the Saints are not direct and full, but yet they are sufficient and satisfactory. The Apostle, when he had a *Thorn in his Flesh, the Messenger of Satan sent to buffet him*, he applies himself to God for Relief; he prays a first and second Time and receives no Answer, and the third God doth not grant him what he desired, which was, that he might be delivered from his present Distress, but the Answer given, Was *My Grace is sufficient for thee, my Strength shalt be made perfect in thy Weakness* (2 Corinthians 12:7, 8, 9.). So that the Lord deferred to give any Answer at all for a Time, and when he did it was not directly suited to the Apostle's Prayer, but yet it was a gracious one, and fully satisfied *Paul*. God's all-sufficient Grace is a sufficient Support under the heaviest Trials and Temptations; and therefore, if he doth not immediately deliver us out of a particular Affliction, or from a particular Temptation, it will be enough if he is but pleased to say, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*. This leads me to observe,

**Thirdly.** That we should not conclude the Lord is unmindful of our Prayers, if we do not receive an immediate and direct Answer from him in some Instances. As,

**1.** When we are under great afflictions we may earnestly intreat the Lord to deliver us Out of those Distresses, but not have our Desires fulfilled. God designs to answer the best Purposes by afflicting of his Children. All Occurrences of Providence, however afflictive they may be, *work together for the Good of those who love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose* (Romans 8:28.). He knows infinitely better than we do, what is best for us, whether Adversity or Prosperity: He intends to wean us from this World, by the Troubles he suffers to invade us, and to bring us nearer to himself by all our Trials. When the wise Designs that he has in view in afflicting of us are brought about, he *will stay his Hand, and say it is enough*. Since we are incapable of forming a Judgment, when it will be proper that we should be delivered out of any Affliction, we ought to ask for it with an entire Submission to the Will of God; and if he continues it longer upon us than we imagine may be necessary to our Advantage, although we have fervently pray'd for its Removal, let us not from thence infer, that God is unmindful of our Petitions, or that it is in vain to call upon him.

**2.** The same may be observed concerning a particular Temptation attending a Believer. All the Methods that Satan makes use of to provoke the People of God to Commit Sin, are very distressing to their Souls; sometimes when they are violently pushed on to the Commission of Evil, they conceive that it will be impossible for them to avoid it, which causes them to say, *Lord save, or I perish*. A Saint may cry earnestly to God for a Deliverance from Temptation, and yet be suffered to labour under it for a considerable Time longer. But this is no Indication, that the Lord is unmindful of our Petitions; he had a merciful Regard to *Paul's Prayer*, though he did not immediately free him from his Trouble.

**3.** If a particular Evil which we may have often prayed against is not subdued, so far as we expect it should be, this is not to be improved as an Objection to the Lord's regarding our Prayer. To instance in Unbelief: The Believer, it may be, has been frequently thrown into deep Distress by the Prevalence of that Evil, notwithstanding he has made a fervent Application to God, for the Strength and Power of it to be reduced; and to his Apprehension it has been so, he has flattered himself it would never more gain such Advantage against him, as formerly it did, but on a sudden he finds himself to be greatly mistaken; for whereas but a little Time since he *thought his Mountain flood strong*, yet now, being under Divine Withdrawings, *be is troubled* (Psalm 30:7.), not only loses, in a great Measure, the Sweetness of those gracious Discoveries he has been favoured with, but also very much hesitates, whether those Comforts were really from God or not, is afraid that they were not the Produce of powerful Grace: Which may hold true of other Evils, for ought I know, though I chose to instance in this.

**4.** If the Lord doth not give us such a Degree of Comfort as we have intreated for, yet he may mercifully hear our Prayer. It is the Pleasure of God to favour some of his Children with much of his spiritual Presence, so that their *Consolation aboundeth by Christ* (2 Corinthians 1:5.). He gives to them clear and distinct Conceptions of his everlasting Love, and of the Designs of that Love; and also of the surprizing Steps which he has taken, in order to accomplish those Designs: He assists them to act a strong and lively Faith on these Things: Thus they are blessed with an Eminency of Knowledge of, and Faith in, *the deep Things of God* (1 Corinthians 2:10.). Weaker Christians may be discouraged because their Experience is not so enlarged and ripened; especially when they have applied to the Throne of Grace, and earnestly prayed, that *God's Comforts* might in the same Manner *delight their Souls* (Psalm 94:19.). But we ought to consider, that in God's Family there are some *Fathers*, or such who are more grown and experienced;

and, that there are *young Men and Babes* (1 John 2:12, 13.) whose Acquaintance with heavenly Mysteries is not so great. Christ hath *Lambs*, as well as full grown *Sheep*, in his Fold, and under his Care; there he acts tenderly towards, for he *gathers them with his Arms, and carries them in his Bosom* (Isaiah 40:11.). Now, if we are not equal in Understanding and Faith to some Believers; or, if we are not Fathers in God's House, this should not discourage us, but rather we ought to be thankful, that we are Babes in Christ; or that we do partake of the same Life and Grace with those who are Fathers, though not in the same Degree.

**5.** If our Gifts are not enlarged equal to our Desires, we are not to infer from thence, that the Lord is regardless of our Prayers. A Believer, when he has a lively Sense of Christ's Love to him, and his Heart glows with Love to Christ, he may ardently desire such a Communication of Gifts from him that might fit him for eminent Service, and yet not have these Desires answered; this is no Objection to God's favourably accepting of them. As *David's* Desire, and Intention to build an House for the Lord, was approved of by him (2 Samuel 12:7.), so these Desires of his People, to be furnished with such Gifts as would render them extensively useful, are far from being unacceptable to him, although he may not design them to that extensive Usefulness; as he did not intend that *David* should erect his Temple, though he approved of his Inclination to do it.

**6.** God may not see meet to make us of that Service in the World, and in the Church, which we desire to be; but neither should this occasion us to think he is unmindful of our Petitions. He is resolved upon carrying on his own Interest, in spite of all Opposition; and he makes use of what Instruments he pleases in doing it. Sometimes he effects the most wonderful Things by such Means that we should imagine are very unlikely to be attended with Success; nay, which certainly would not be, but that they are used by Omnipotence, which puts Efficacy into the Means it uses, how much soever they may seem unsuited to the Nature of the Work for which they are designed. It may be the Pleasure of the Lord to make some of his Servants more eminently serviceable in his Interest than others, to whom they are far inferior in Gifts; this he does to hide *Pride from Man* (Job 33:17.), and to teach us, that Whatever our Abilities be, the Success attending the Exercise of them is wholly from God. If we are not of that Service which we desire to be, it ought to keep us humble; but we should not sink into Diffidence and Unbelief on that Account. The Lord may not see it proper to answer us in these Particulars mentioned, in that Manner or Degree which we could be glad of; but hence we ought not to infer, that our Prayers are unacceptable to him, or that he will not hear us, in what more

immediately concerns our Welfare and Happiness. The Reason of which is plainly this, he hath not given us such clear Evidence of his Designs concerning us in these Things, as he has given of his kind Thoughts about us, respecting our Felicity hereafter.

The Divine Word doth not inform us, how far we shall be afflicted and tempted whilst here; nor how far Sin shall be subdued, or what Degrees of Grace we shall have, how large our Gifts shall be, nor of what Service we shall be in this World, but it gives us clear Evidence concerning those Things which relate to our eternal State; such as,

**1.** The Knowledge we have of our Danger and Misery by Nature. Whilst Men are unregenerate they are insensible of their spiritual *Wretchedness* and *Poverty*, and *Blindness*, and *Nakedness*; they imagine themselves *to be rich, and increased with Goods, and to have need of nothing* (Revelation 3:17.); in their own Esteem they are *whole, and have no need of the Physician* (Matthew 9:12.); but when born again, or divinely enlightened, they behold the exceeding Corruption of their Nature (Romans 7:18.), the great Transgressions of their Lives (Romans 5:20.), their own Inability to perform any Duty in an acceptable Manner (Romans 8:8.), the Necessity of a perfect Righteousness, in order to Justification before God, and the Imperfection that attends their own, that it's no better than *filthy Rags* (Isaiah 64:6.); hence they conclude, that they are entirely in themselves, or Irrecoverably soft, unless Divine Favour interposes, and prevents their sinking into eternal Ruin.

**2.** The Apprehensions we have of Christ: as a Saviour. An Acquaintance with the excelling Glory of his Person is a free Gift (2 Corinthians 4:6.). The Knowledge of his Merits being the only and effectual procuring Cause of the Remission of Sins; of his Righteousness, as being available to, and the alone Matter of a Sinner's Justification before God; and a Sense of the Fulness of his Grace being solely equal to the Supply of our spiritual Needs, are owing to the Influences of the Holy Spirit upon us (John 16:14.).

**3.** An entire Dependance on him, as thus suited to our Case, is an Effect of powerful Grace; for he expressly tells us, *That no Man can come to him, except the Father, which hath lent him, draw him* (John 6:44.). And therefore if we have experienced such a Work, we may be assured that we are *passed from Death to Life* (1 John 3:14.), or are spiritually *quickened*, though we were once *dead in Trespasses and Sins* (Ephesians 2:1.); and may say with Manoah's Wife, *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a Burnt-Offering, and a Meat-Offering at our Hands; neither would he have shewed us all these Things, nor would, as at this Time, have told us*

*such Things as these* (Judges 13:23.). It will be no Presumption to conclude, that *God has loved us with an everlasting Love*, if he has thus *drawn us with Loving-Kindness* (Jeremiah 31:3.); or, that God has *predestinated us to become conformed to the Image of his Son* (Romans 8:29.); for he has really begun to accomplish such a gracious Decree upon us, and will fully perfect it. Our Confidence hereof is securely built upon the never-failing Foundation of his unalterable Love, and steady Purpose (Psalm 103:17. Romans 8:30.); *Being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you will perform it, until the Day of Christ* (Philippians 1:6.), when *he will present us faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy* (Jude 1:20.).

## SERMON 7

### **REMARKS UPON A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'SOME DOCTRINES IN THE SUPERLAPSARIAN SCHEME IMPARTIALLY EXAMIN'D BY THE WORD OF GOD'**

CONTAINING A DEFENCE OF SEVERAL  
EVANGELICAL DOCTRINES THEREIN OBJECTED TO.

I HAVE lately met with a Pamphlet, entitled, *Some Doctrines in the Superlapsarian Scheme impartially examined by the Word of God*, which does not bear the Name of its Author: For what Reason he chose to conceal his Name, I don't pretend to determine; only conjecture, it might be to keep clear of a publick Imputation of the Want of Skill in the sublime Subjects of which he treats, and of a due Deference to some worthy Persons on whom he pours Contempt.

My firm Regard to religious Liberty, and Desire of Improvement in Knowledge, will not permit me to be offended with any who shall think proper to animadvert upon what I publish to the World; and, if treated with Decency and Respect, by such as examine my Opinions, I shall esteem It as an additional Favour done me. How much I am indebted to this Author, on this Account, the Reader will easily determine.

It might be justly thought, from the Title this Performance bears, that Impartiality and Ingenuity, with a steady Regard to the Holy Scripture, run through the whole; but any may readily see, that *Fronti nulla Fides* is a very proper Motto for it.

*This Writer militates against the Supralasarian Way of stating the Doctrine of Election; which, he imagines, has run its Savourers into many false Opinions and great Absurdities.*

Here he opposes it under these Considerations: As a Doctrine destitute of Scripture-Support; repugnant to God's Foreknowledge; as It lessens the Grace of God; and is injurious to his Justice.

The *Supralapsarian* Opinion, in itself, doth not labour under the Difficulties with which this Author endeavours to clog it. Those who state the Doctrine of Election in this Way, think that the Objects of God's Choice were considered by him in their Election to the End, that is to say, to eternal Glory, as in *massa pura*, or as unfallen; but that in Election to the Means tending to that End, they were view'd, as in *massa corrupta*, as fallen, guilty Creatures. And *therefore it is sufficient, to obviate the*

*Objections he advances against their Sentiments in this Point, to give a just Account of them. However, I shall briefly consider his Objections: And,*

**Object. 1.** *He charges this Opinion with the Want of Scripture-Support.* In Answer to this, let it be observed: That the *Supralapsarians* think their Opinion receives some Evidence from these Words, *Whom he did fore- know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son:* And also from these Words of the same Apostle, *As he hath chosen us in him* (Ephesians 1:4.): Which plainly suggest, that Christ is the Object of Election, as Mediator. Now he could not be considered but as pure; and it is reasonable to suppose, that his Members were so considered, who were chosen in him. This Author's Sense of these Words is certainly unnatural: He supposes, God chose us to the *Enjoyment of spiritual Blessings, in order to effect our Sanctification*. Is not Sanctification one of those Blessings? How then can it be said, that we are chosen to the Enjoyment of Sanctification, in order to effect it? The effecting of a Thing is, doubtless, prior to the Enjoyment of it. It is unblameable Holiness, or absolute Perfection in Heaven, that is intended in these Words. And therefore, the *Supralapsarians* are not guilty of a Contradiction, when they say, that God chose us that we might be holy and not because he foresaw we would so be, previous to that his eternal Choice, as he asserts they are: When they thus speak, they design Election to the Means.

The Decree of God to sanctify his Elect necessarily supposes, that they were considered as sinful Creatures; but his Purpose of their standing before him in un-blamable Holiness in Heaven does not, which is the Holiness designed in these Words. Again, it will be very difficult to prove, that the Elect were ever considered as guilty,

sinful Creatures, in Christ. Farther, Christ is laid to be *chosen from out of the People* (Psalm 89:18.). Now, as he was considered pure in his Election, to be an Head to the Church, it is not unreasonable to conceive that those, from among whom he was chosen, were also so considered. Moreover, it is manifest, that *Esau* and *Jacob* were not considered as having contracted any Guilt in God's eternal Decree; when the latter was chosen to everlasting Life, and an Act of Preterition was passed upon the former: *For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth* (Romans 9:11.).

**Object. 2.** *This Doctrine of theirs is repugnant to their own Opinion of God's eternal Fore-knowledge.* The Supralapsarians freely allow the Doctrine of God's eternal Prescience; that by one Act of his infinite Understanding, he foresaw all the differing Scenes the Objects of his Election would run through, perfectly consistent with their Opinion of his considering them as pure in their Election to the End, but as fallen in their Election to the Means tending to that End: And this, without the Supposition of Priority, or Posteriority in God, whose infinite Mind conceived of all Things at once; the End, and the Means: *Known unto God are all his Works, from the Beginning* (Acts 15:18.).

**Object. 3.** *This Doctrine tends to lessen the Grace and Mercy of God in Election.* This is a great Mistake; for, though God chose his People to eternal Glory above the Consideration of the Fall, he decreed to permit it in order to render his free Grace eminently glorious in bringing them to Happiness.

**Object. 4.** *He conceits it is contrary to God's Justice.* This Way of Reasoning fixes the Damnation of poor Souls on God's Act of Preterition; if they are rejected as Creatures only, and not as sinful Creatures. In answer, let it be observed, an Act of Preterition was pass'd on the apostate Spirits, considered as unfallen; yet this was not the Cause of their Damnation, but the Sin which they voluntarily committed: Thus, as to the Non-elect among Men, God's Act of Preterition past upon them, is not the Cause of their Damnation, but their own Guilt. Besides, Pre-damnation, or an Ordination to Punishment, supposes the Consideration of the Fall and Guilt contracted by those who are the Objects of this Ordination to Penalty. The Act of Preterition, or negative Election, was no other than a Determination not to confer such Grace upon the Non-elect, which was no way due to them: And Pre-damnation, or Ordination to Punishment, was only a Decree to inflict upon them the Demerit of their Crimes. In all which there is not the least Injustice.

*Our Author proceeds to take Notice of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification; which he ignorantly imagines naturally springs from the Supralapsarian Opinion:* Whereas this is a *Sublapsarian* Doctrine, or follows upon the Consideration of the Fall, as every judicious Reader will easily, observe: For, if we were not unrighteous in ourselves, we should not stand in need of Christ's Righteousness to justify us. To that Doctrine he objects, that we *no where read of being justified before Faith.* Though we do not read this syllabically, or in such Terms expressly, yet we read that which is equivalent to it, as will be seen hereafter.

*He goes on to observe some dangerous Opinions, as he apprehends, that follow upon the Doctrine of Eternal Justification:* Such as these; that we are only to pray for a Manifestation of the Pardon of Sin; and that Sin was imputed to Christ: Two other Things he mentions; that God was eternally reconciled to the Elect, which I shall presently consider; and that God loved and delighted in his People while in Sin, the Defence of which I leave to Mr. *Gill*; he being more particularly concerned in that Part of the Argument. And therefore, I shall only consider what he offers on the Head of praying for the Pardon of Sin, the Imputation of it to Christ, and Reconciliation.

**1st. To begin with, Praying for the Pardon of Sin.** And it will be proper to consider what Remission, or the Pardon of Sin is: Which I take to be this; The Will of God, to acquit and discharge us of the Guilt that we contract, or the Non-imputation of it; as seems dear from the Apostle's Words, *Who shall say anything to the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that justifies* (Romans 8:33.); *i.e.* he acquits and discharges them. Now God eternally willed not to impute Sin to his Chosen: For, when he *was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, i.e.* drawing the Plan of their Reconciliation, it was thus; *Not imputing their Trespasses unto them* (2 Corinthians 5:19): And therefore, their Pardon is as ancient as God's Decrees. See this more fully vindicated in my *Defence of eternal Justification.* If God's Will, not to impute Sin to his People, or his Will, not to charge their Guilt upon them, is their Pardon or real Discharge, which this Author has not thought proper to deny; and this Will is eternal in God, as all the Acts of his Will most certainly are; then, when we pray for Pardon, it ought not to be with Ideas of God's beginning to will not to impute that Sin to us, which we pray for the Remission of; but only an Application of Pardon to our Souls, through Christ's Blood, can be justly intended by us in our Petitions of this Kind. The Instances of Saints praying for Pardon, and the Directions given to us so to do, this Author should have proved intend more than this, in order to establish what he designed: Since he has not, they are of no

Service to his Cause; nor do they militate with our Opinion in this Article. I freely confess, I think myself under Obligation humbly to pray to God for Pardon, *i.e.* a View of it; although I conceive, if I am so happy as to be of the Number of God's Elect, he has *forgiven me all Trespasses* (Colossians 2:13.), past, present, and to come. Let not our Author start, as one in a Surprize, at complete Remission; for 'tis an *Evangelical Truth*, whatever he may think of it.

**2nd. He opposes the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ;** in which I wish he had shewn more Temper and Moderation: I imagine, the Reader can't but think him guilty of intemperate Zeal, how knowing soever he may conceive him to be. I apprehend, this Doctrine receives evident Proof from the Sacred Scriptures; which declare, that our *Iniquities were laid on Christ* (Isaiah 53:6.); that *he, who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us* (2 Corinthians 5:21.); and that *he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree* (1 Peter 2:24.): Which intend a Charge, or Imputation of our Guilt to Christ, as our Surety, as what was necessary to his suffering the Penalty due to us. Our Author does not fairly represent our Opinion, when he makes us say, it *cannot consist with the Justice of God to wound his Son, if he is not really the Sinner*; for we say punish his Son, not merely wound him: An Innocent Person may suffer, but he cannot be punished, without manifest Injustice, unless some Crime is charged upon him. Since, therefore, Christ *was made a Curse* (Galatians 3:13.) in his Sufferings, or the Punishment due to us was inflicted on him, the Imputation of those Crimes to him, that were the meritorious Cause of that Penalty, is necessarily supposed.

This Writer thinks, that when Christ is said to be made Sin, it is to be taken in a metonymical Sense: And in his Margin gives us this Account of that Trope; *A metonymy is a changing of, or putting one Thing, or more, for another.* I excuse his bad Orthography; it ought to be Metonymy. It is not the putting of any Thing in the room of another, as the putting of one Contrary for another, which he conceives: Unbelief is not put for Faith in these Words, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief* (Mark 9:24.).

The Sense of which is not, Lord help my Faith, but assist me against my powerful Unbelief.

Since Christ's being made Sin is a scriptural Mode of speaking, he ought to have treated It with greater Decency than he has done. It is not designed thereby, that he became impure, either in his Nature, or in any of his Actions; but a Sinner, or Guilty, by Way of Imputation only. As the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us works no Change in our Nature, from sinful to holy, so the Imputation of our Sins to him effected no Alteration in his pure and holy Nature: That

remained untainted, notwithstanding this Imputation of our Guilt to him. He imagines, *sin cannot be imputed, be-cause 'tis not Substance*; by which it appears, he is ignorant of the Nature of Imputation. A Substance, or Body, as Stone, may be cast at, or let fall upon a Person, but cannot be imputed to him, or placed to his Account. Farther, The Filthiness of our Nature was imputed to, and atoned for by Christ; or else it will prove our Destruction: And so also, the perfect Holiness of Christ's Nature is imputed to us; though I do not take this to be our Sanctification, but a Branch of our justifying Righteousness: The Law requiring Purity of Heart, as well as Conformity in Life, in order to our Justification. It is true, that Christ healed distempered Persons of their bodily Disorders, not by taking them upon himself; but it doth not thence follow, that he did not bear away Sin, by having it imputed to him, and atoning for it, as this Author suggests. It is no other than a *Socinian Gloss* he puts upon the Words of the Prophet: *The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all. Christ was not in all Respects separate from Sinners, except in the blasphemous Accounts of his Enemies*, as he asserts: For Sin was as really imputed to Christ, as his Righteousness is imputed to us for our Justification: But this Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness he seems as averse to, as to that of the Imputation of our Sins to him; for he tells us, *We are made Saviours thereby*. To let aside which, it is sufficient to observe, that we contribute nothing, either to the Being or Value of this Righteousness; nor to its Imputation: And how, therefore, the Imputation of it to us, in order to our Salvation, infers that we are Saviours, will be very difficult for him to demonstrate.

The Liberty he takes with Dr. *Crisp* is very indecent: Let not this low Defamer conceit, it will ever be in his Power to risk the Reputation of that excellent Person, who has been well defended by such as are no way inferior to him in Learning, good Sense, and Knowledge in Divinity; the Doctor's own Son, 'Squire Edwards, and Dr. *Chauncy*. In the Writings of which learned Gentlemen, such Arguments are advanced in Favour of Christ's being made Sin by Way of Imputation, in which Sense only Dr. *Crisp* understood it, that, perhaps, he may never dare attempt an Answer to. If some particular Expressions have dropp'd from his Pen, that are not so well guarded as might be wished, the Substance of his Doctrine is solid, Spiritual, and evangelical; infinitely more valuable than what the Performance of this Author can boast.

Next he is pleased to treat the learned and great Mr. *Hussey* in a very scurrilous Manner; him he calls a *ridiculous Writer*.

It might have been thought that his great Learning, extensive Knowledge, and Zeal for Truth, would have raised him, at least,

above the Contempt of this Person; who, it will hardly be allowed, is equal to that learned Author in any Respect. The Charge he brings against him, of endeavouring to prove that Christ was not only guilty by way of Imputation, *but filthy too*, hath no more Truth in it, than the Author of the Charge has Modesty: For he is so far from suggesting any Thing like this, that he very cautiously guards against it. The Simile he makes use of, and which this Examiner mentions, is a sufficient Vindication of him in this Particular: It is this; *suppose*, says he, *a Drop of Ink, or Poison, falls upon a fiery Globe* (Mr. Hussey don't say here, a Globe as big as this Earth, as he makes him to say) *could that Ink, or Poison, leave any sullyng Mark behind it?*

Now, though Mr. Hussey, in his Simile, mentions only a Drop of Ink, or Poison, it was not with a Design to extenuate the Sin Christ bore, or the Greatness of the Filth there is in the Sins of the Elect: For he calls it, *a Deluge of Corruption, and a Sea of Filthiness to us*; though but *as a Drop, in comparison with Christ's infinite Power to Subdue Sin*: Which, if this Writer had observed, it might have prevented his making the first Remark upon the Simile, as it effectually answers it. His second is; *He should have mentioned the polluting Stuff as poured into the Globe, and not as dropped upon it*. I answer, Mr. Hussey did not design a Communication of Sin or Filthiness to Christ; but the Imputation of Sin, with all its Filthiness to him, and the quick Sense Christ had of the Father's charging Sin upon him, and of the Pollution of that Sin imputed to him; all which was, without his being, in the least, defiled by it: And therefore, our Author is altogether mistaken, in supposing the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ: to be *Blasphemy, and vile Nonsense*. I hope he is one interested in the Intercession of Christ, and shall therefore obtain the Pardon of the Guilt he may have contracted, by his too warm and ignorant Opposition to the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ; who, when on the Cross, prayed thus to the Father, in behalf of those of his People, who, through Ignorance, were concerned in his Death, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34.): Which cannot, I think, be urged in his Favour, to abate the Greatness of his Crime, in charging Mr. Hussey with making Christ *inherently filthy*.

If the Evil he has been guilty of in defaming those, who believe and defend the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, should lie on his Conscience, as what was not imputed to, and atoned for by him, whatever he may think of the Matter, now it will inexpressibly wound him.

*Sin, which Christ was made, stands opposed to Righteousness, which we are made* (2 Corinthians 5:20.). Now suffering for Sin, or

the Penalty due to it, is not to be opposed to God's *Righteousness*, or Faithfulness: But Sin, which Christ is laid to be made, may very justly be opposed to that Righteousness which we are made; if we understand by Sin our Guilt, and by Righteousness Christ's perfect Obedience, which is the true Sense of the Text: For the Apostle certainly intends two Contraries, by Sin and Righteousness.

Christ's being made an *Offering for Sin* (Isaiah 53:10.), designs his being made Sin, or Guilt; *when thou shalt make his Soul*, עַל, that is, *Guilt*; which plainly suggests the Imputation of Sin. The Word is sometimes rendered Trespass; *and he shall recompense*, וְשָׁׁלֵם, his *Trespass*. It is used to express Guiltiness; *and thou be found Guilty* (Numbers 5:7.), נִמְצָא אֲלֹמֶד Therefore, that it was Guilt or Sin that Christ was made, appears from these Words.

It is very unaccountable, that he should pronounce this Doctrine *as absurd and vile, if not more vile* than Transubstatiation. In his next Performance, let him prove it to be so, in a single Instance, if he can; he has done nothing towards it in this.

I now proceed to consider what he offers on the Doctrines of Reconciliation, Justification and Adoption.

**3rd. I shall attend to what he delivers on the Article of Reconciliation:** And to prevent Mistakes, the Reader will please to permit me to state my Opinion in this Point; I readily allow, that Sin has caused a Distance between God and the Elect, as considered in themselves, on God's Part, which I need only consider. It supposes,

A Disapprobation of their Persons, as viewed in themselves: Herein I conceive God is to be considered as a Lawgiver.

That *God*, by his Law, pronounces a Curse against them on account of their Transgressions: So that God's Justice, or infinitely pure Nature, and holy Law, stand engaged against them.

These two Things, I apprehend, are designed, where they are said to be *Children of Wrath* Ephesians 2:3., and nothing more. A Purpose of inflicting any Part of the Penalty, demerited by their Sins, cannot be intended; for the Apostle says expressly, *God hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Thessalonians 5:9.). Besides, Christ bore the whole Punishment due to their Crimes; or else he is not a complete Saviour, which he certainly is; for the Father has made him the *Captain of his Peoples Salvation, perfect through Sufferings* (Hebrews 2:10.), that is to say, a perfect Saviour: And therefore, Reconciliation cannot design either of these two Things;

That God did not love his People prior to Reconciliation made. Such a Supposition is subversive of the Doctrine of God's Love to the Elect, as the Cause of the Gift of his Son for them; which is a Truth our Saviour himself plainly teaches us (John 3:16.).

It does not intend a Change in his Thoughts concerning them. It is not to be imagined, that God entertained a Purpose in his Heart to take Vengeance on Sin in the Persons of the Elect; but was diverted from such an Intention, by the Sufferings and Death of his Son; for he is not liable to any Change in his Resolutions: *The Council of the Lord standeth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations* (Psalm 33:11.). And therefore all that can be designed by Reconciliation, is the Satisfaction of Law and Justice; that the former might be *magnified*, and the Glory of the latter be effectually secured in the Salvation of God's Chosen: No Alteration in the Affections, or Disposition of the divine Mind, can be intended.

This Author strenuously opposes eternal Reconciliation; and very justly, if he had designed Christ's making Reconciliation in Eternity: But, since he intends the Reconciliation of God, or of divine Justice, to the Persons of the Elect, he is egregiously mistaken; for the present Being of Christ's Satisfaction is not necessary to Reconciliation: Divine Justice, or God, as a Law-giver, was reconciled to the Elect, upon Christ's undertaking to suffer and die for them; although he did not then lay down what Justice demanded. Nor can I apprehend any Difficulty to attend this, more than may be thought to attend God's punishing of his Son for Millions of Sins that were not as yet committed: Actual Reconciliation doth not necessarily suppose the present Being of Christ's Satisfaction, is evident; for, doubtless, God, or divine Justice, was reconciled to *the Old Testament Saints*, who were glorified before the Time of Christ's Crucifixion.

Now, as actual Reconciliation to those of the Elect, did not set aside the Necessity of his making Satisfaction for their Sins, or answering the Demands of Law and Justice in their behalf; Why should it be thought, that actual Reconciliation to them, and all the Elect before Time, renders Christ's making Satisfaction, or answering the Demands of Law and Justice unnecessary, and makes what he did and suffered *ineffectual, yea, needless?* Let our Author shew this if he can. But, in order to remove this Difficulty, which expresses his Opinion very hard, let him not imagine, that *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, with other Believers, were not admitted to Heaven till Christ had suffered. When he shall demonstrate, that actual Reconciliation to them, was consistent with the Necessity of Christ's acting in the mediatorial Character, and dying for their Sins, I shall be able to prove, that the Doctrine of Reconciliation to all the Elect, before

Time, perfectly agrees therewith. If he pleases, I will acquaint him with my Notion in this Matter: It is this; Reconciliation to the Persons of the Elect, is founded upon the federal Engagements of Christ; and therefore, the Certainty of his Suffering was necessarily supposed. From whence it follows, that, unless that which supposes the certain, though future Being of a Thing, destroys the Necessity of its Being, this Doctrine renders not Christ's Death, and Satisfaction to Law and Justice, or to God, as a Law-giver, unnecessary. Thus, all our Author's Reasoning on this Subject sinks at once, which fills up so many Pages.

Some Time since, I published *a Defence of the Doctrine of eternal Justification, from some Exceptions made to it by Mr. Bragge, and others*; several Things in which, this Author has thought proper to take Notice of: He begins with what I have advanced in Favour of actual Reconciliation before Faith. The Words cited by me, as an evident Proof of that Doctrine, are, *If, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life*. The Sense of which, I take to be this; That Paul, and all the Elect of God, were reconciled while Enemies by Virtue of Christ's Death; and that, in Consequence of this Reconciliation, they become reconciled in themselves, or the Enmity of their Hearts is slain; and, being thus reconciled, they may be assured of eternal Happiness by Christ's ever living to intercede for them: So that Reconciliation, in the first Branch, intends the Satisfaction of Justice by the Death of Christ; and Reconciliation, in the second, designs the conquering of our perverse Minds by omnipotent Grace. Herein the Apostle's Reasoning appears very clear and strong; which stands thus: If Law and Justice were satisfied for our Sins by Christ's Death, when we were in open Rebellion against God; much more, since the Perverseness of our Hearts is subdued, we may steadily expect everlasting Happiness by his Life of Intercession for us: This doth not make the Apostle guilty of *Nonsense, or bad Divinity*, as our Examiner weakly imagines.

It is not a little observable, that, though this Writer militates so much against Reconciliation before Faith, he is yet obliged to grant it: When he comes to give his own Sense of the Words, it is thus; *God was hereby reconciled to the Elect, by Virtue of the Price of our Redemption, etc.*

Doth he allow, that God was reconciled by Virtue of Christ's Death! How then could he assert, that *Reconciliation is not before Faith?* Perhaps, he may find it no easy Matter to reconcile Petitions so clearly opposite. Unless I am mistaken, he has, in these few Words, overthrown all that he offers against the Doctrine of Reconciliation before Faith: It may be, hereafter, he will write with a better Guard,

and deny, that Satisfaction is made by Christ's Death, in order to destroy the Doctrine of Reconciliation before Faith; since he is so great an Adversary to it. He *conceives*, that the Price of Pardon, or the Atonement, must be pleaded either by the believing Soul, or else by his Advocate above for him. But, to what End? Surely, not in order to Satisfaction; for that wholly arises from the infinite Dignity of the Person who suffered: Christ's Intercession with God, in behalf of his People, adds no Efficacy to his Death, as a Propitiation for their Sins; but his Intercession is founded upon the Compleatness of his Satisfaction. Besides, doth not the Elects Advocate plead his Sufferings in their Favour, while in Unbelief, in order to their believing? And can he imagine, that Christ's urging his Death, in Favour of his People, is less prevalent with God, than their pleading it when they believe? Moreover, Faith, in pleading the Sufferings of Christ, considers divine Justice as fully satisfied thereby, for the Sins of those Persons on whose Account he suffered; which the Apostle designs in Part, at least, by *receiving the Atonement* (Romans 5:11.). And if so, it necessarily follows, that Reconciliation has not the least Dependance on Faith, but is prior to it, and doth not commence with the Being of that Grace.

**4th. I go on to answer what he objects to the Doctrine of Justification before Faith.** It has been thought, that these Words afford full Evidence thereof: *But believeth on him, that justifieth the ungodly.* Whereupon he thus delivers himself: *I understand, that what Faith applies to, and lays hold of, is intended hereby, and not the Act of Faith only.* Not the Act of Faith only; is Faith then, in his Account, a Part of our justifying Righteousness? This is not sound Protestant Doctrine, which teaches that Christ's Righteousness alone is the Matter of a Sinner's Justification before God. Those, who favour the Doctrine of Justification before Faith, think it is strongly maintained in this Text; because it is expressly said, that God *justifieth the Ungodly*: By which they conclude, Believers cannot be designed; nor has this Gentleman thought proper to suggest, that they ever pass under such a Character: And if they do not, then Unbelievers are the Objects of Justification, how unwilling soever he may be to allow it. Why, therefore, does he affirm, that *Justification before Faith is a mere human Conjecture*, that hath not *Scripture to support it?* Unless he can prove, that Believers are ungodly Persons, this Text will remain an immovable Bar to the Truth of what he asserts with such an Air of Assurance: He supposes the Difficulty may be removed; but it is a very odd Method he takes to do it; not by proving that Believers are designed, but charges the Apostle with down-right Contradiction. It is thus: *The Apostle, says he, by a long Train of Arguments, is proving that our Justification is by Faith; therefore, it is highly, irrational to suppose, that he should*

*intend here, that the Believer was pardoned, or accepted of God, while he was in Unbelief.* If this is not to make the Apostle contradict himself, it will be difficult to determine what Self-contradiction is: He grants, that the Apostle designs Unbelievers, by the Term *ungodly*; and yet represents him *as proving, by a long Train of Arguments*, that the Believer was not accepted of God, or justified, while in Unbelief.

He adds, *This would render the Apostle's Meaning as remote from good sense as possible, and as ridiculous, as if he should say, If you believe, you shall have Righteousness imputed to you for your Justification; because that Righteousness was imputed to you while you were Unbelievers, or ungodly Sinners. If this is not the native Style of their Doctrine (the Supralapsarians) then will I submit to be censured for an Idiot.* He may be assured, I shall never censure him for an Idiot; yet, I cannot think his Talent, in Disputation, will be much admired; not but he might have succeeded better, if he had understood the Subjects upon which he writes. In order to clear the *Supralapsarians*, as he loves to call those who entertain the Doctrine of Justification before Faith, from supposing the Apostle guilty of such bad Sense, I need only observe, that they think their Opinion of the Commencement of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness before Faith, is clear from his affirming, God justifieth the ungodly, and that he only can intend the Knowledge of Justification, when he declares it is by Faith; and therefore, they are far from imagining it is, as if he should say, if you believe, you shall have Righteousness imputed to you for your Justification: They think, that cannot consist with his Declaration of God's justifying the Elect, while ungodly; but allow, it is agreeable enough to the Apostle's Sense, That, upon believing, the Elect, by Faith, apprehend the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and are ready still to maintain, that the Apostle designs nothing more, when he says, we are justified by Faith; if Faith is to be taken in a proper Sense, and the Object of it is not intended.

Again, he farther observes, that some-times Justification is spoken of as future: *By the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.* I suppose, by this, he means it cannot be an Act which was past upon the Elect before Faith; but, if he considers that to be, frequently intends the Manifestation of what is; as for Instance, in those Words of Christ, *So shall ye be my Disciples* (John 15:8.); *i.e.* appear to be; I say, when he shall consider this, perhaps, he may conceive such Modes of Expression, he here refers to, make not so much for his Opinion as he imagines they do. Next he informs us, that Mr. *Henry* would have the Text read, *but believeth on him that justifieth that ungodly one; meaning Abraham, who was an Idolater.* The words

are not thus rendered by any learned Person that I know of; *Arias Montanus*, *Beza*; *Calvin*, *Pareus*, and *Hutter*, in his *Hebrew Version*, all read as we do, and the *Syriac* reads Sinners; and, what *Mr. Henry* says, will hardly be thought of greater Weight, than the Authority of so many learned Men; nor is there any Necessity for this reading: τὸς ἀεβη̄ is, indeed, in the singular Number, but it is not unusually taken in a collective Sense; as in these Words, *If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly?* Οἱ ἀεβη̄ς, in the singular Number, as here, yet it designs all the Non-elect; *and the Sinner appear* (1 Peter 4:18.). Besides, if that Reading be admitted, unless it is proved that the Apostle considered *Abraham* as ungodly when a Believer, the Argument loses nothing of its Force; if he respects him as an Idolater, and not as a Believer, then God justified him prior to his Faith; and, if he thus justified *Abraham*, he also does every other elect Person.

He objects to Faith being a Manifestation of our Justification, thus: *Certainly we must be very uncharitable to the greatest Part of exemplary Christians, if we will not admit any to be true Believers, but such as have the undoubted Manifestation of their being in a justified State.* I do not dissent from him in this: But, I think, he will not be capable of proving, that the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, in our Sense of it, involves such Uncharitableness in it: For, though we understand Justification by Faith to be the Evidence, or Perception of Justification, we do not assert, that this must arise to an undoubted Manifestation of our Interest in Christ's justifying Righteousness. What we maintain is, that Faith acting on the Righteousness of Christ alone, for Acceptance with God, is, in itself, a clear Evidence of the Imputation of that Righteousness to us; inasmuch as it is a Branch of the Spirit's Work to convince us of the Necessity of an Interest in that Righteousness, in order to our Justification; although, through Unbelief, we may be prevented of apprehending this to be such an Evidence. We farther maintain, that Hope ever acts in Conjunction with Faith; when the latter is wholly out of Exercise, it will be difficult to discover any Actings of the former. Besides, the good Measure of Hope that a Believer has of an Interest in Christ, and his justifying Righteousness, has some Degree of Evidence of such an Interest, or else it would be entirely without Foundation to support it; altho' that Evidence is not so strong as to carry him to a full Assurance of Faith. Thus it appears, that Faith is an Evidence of Justification by Christ, and that that Evidence is clearer, or less evident, according as that Grace is weaker or stronger: And therefore, this Author mistakes us, if he thinks we assert Justification, by Faith, to be art undoubted Manifestation of our Interest in that Benefit. He tells us, that Ezekiel 16:8. is urged in

favour of Justification before Faith, but does not acquaint us by whom; perhaps, he met with it in Conversation with some Persons upon the Subject: Which if he did, and thinks it impertinent, Why does he expose it to publick View? Can he be ignorant, that, if every Thing which is offered in Defence of Truth in private Converse among Christians should be made publick, it would not be much to its Advantage? However, I shall consider his Observations on the Text; and he thus remarks upon it, *If this Verse is to be understood, as (let it be) so God's imputing the Righteousness of Christ, when he is said to spread his Skirts over the Sinner, then I presume, that that Day of the Sinner's being born, refers to the new Birth, or Regeneration in the fifth Verse.* 'Tis not a little strange, that the allegorical Representation of our filthy, miserable, and helpless Condition by Nature, should be thought by this Author to refer to our Regeneration; for that is all that is designed in the 4th and 5th Verses. I imagine, every judicious Reader will easily see that the Birth mentioned cannot be the new. The 6th and 8th Verses give us an Account of our Regeneration, as a Work that passes upon us when in the deplorable Condition that is let forth in the 4th and 5th Verses. He is very much mistaken in thinking the Soul is represented in the 5th Verse, as conscious of its own miserable State; that is a plain Account of our natural Condition, but not of our Apprehension of that State. Besides, he is as far from the Truth, in supposing, that when God says to us, live, we have such just Apprehensions of our natural Condition; the true Knowledge of that, follows upon the Communication of spiritual Life, and doth not precede it: We are very far from that Humility, and Self-abasement, which this Author suggests to be in us, when God says to us, live. Farther, I apprehend, the justifying Righteousness of Christ may be intended in the 8th Verse, and that, by spreading of it over us, respect is had to a Ceremony used by the Jews in their Nuptials. But this designs not the Commencement of the Imputation of that Righteousness, only the Discovery of it to our Souls for our Consolation and joy; as that Phrase, *and thou becamest mine*, does not intend that God's Interest in us commences upon our believing, but only the Manifestation of that Interest, which I shall more particularly consider hereafter. Upon the whole, although this Text doth not furnish us out with a Proof of justification before Faith, it contains nothing inconsistent with it, as this Author imagines.

**5thly. I shall consider his Remarks on what I have offered in favour of Adoption before Faith.** The Scripture I quoted to support this was; *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Galatians 4:6.). I pass over his insinuating that I am *infatuated* with a *blind Zeal*, as below my Notice; all such Insinuations will meet with a Contempt from

me, equal to that with which he can possibly deliver them. He observes, the Apostle informed the *Galatians* of the *Medium* of their Adoption in these Words, *For ye are all the Children of God, by Faith in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:26.). How Faith is the Medium, or Mean of Adoption, I am utterly unable to conceive; it is certain, that Adoption is God's Act, or he fixes us in the honourable Relation of Sons to himself. Now, it is not to be conceived, that God makes use of Faith in this Act of his, it cannot be; for, as we are the Subjects of this Grace, all the Actings of it are proper to us: Unless, therefore, we make ourselves the Sons of God by Faith, or Believing, Adoption itself cannot be by this Grace. Whence it follows, that the Apostle must design by these Words, that Faith is that Grace by which we know our Adoption, and receive the Immunities arising from that Relation. Faith is the Medium, Mean, or Instrument, by which we partake of the Benefits of Adoption, but it cannot be the Medium of Adoption itself; the manifest Reason of which is, that is God's Act, and not ours.

I cannot tell, whether some of his Readers may not think him chargeable with rash Boldness, which he is very forward to fix upon others, when he says, *That there is not one Word in the Text that favours the Opinion of Adoption before Faith*. He adds, *If it had been written to suit their Scheme, it must have read in the past Tense, thus; and because ye were Sons, etc. Had it been thus wrote, the bold Maintainers of Sonship before Faith might have made their Triumphs with a better Grace*. Our Author seems to take a peculiar Pleasure in representing the Savourers of the Opinions he opposes, as bold, daring, and insulting Persons: How much to the Advantage of his Argument, it is not difficult to determine. 'Tis not improbable, but many, at least, may conclude, that his contemptuous Way of Writing carries no great Force of Reasoning in it. He should have considered, that we apprehend our Sonship, or filial Relation to God, is the Cause of the Mission of the Holy Spirit into our Hearts; and that these Words are an evident Proof of it, though expressed in the present, and not in the part Tense. We conceive, the Design of the Apostle is to shew, that the Mission of the Spirit results from this our Relation of Sons to God, which this Author has not so much as attempted to disprove; and of Consequence, that we must be Sons before the Holy Spirit is sent into our Hearts; for the Cause is previous to its Effect. Its being expressed in the present Tense, is no Objection to this, as may be evinced by this Supposition: Suppose a Father having a rebellious Son, yet continues to confer Favours upon him, it should be observed to the Son, that his Carriage renders him undeserving of his Father's paternal Affection, notwithstanding such a Favour he has bestowed upon you, because you are his Son; would not every one clearly discern that the Relation was the Cause of the

Favour being granted to him, no less than if it had been laid, because you were a Son? As easy it is to discover this to be the true Meaning of the Apostle's Words: And, I am persuaded, this Author will never be able to fix any other upon them; though, through his warm Opposition to the Doctrine irrefragably supported by them, he may be induced to stretch his Thoughts to the utmost, in order to it.

I must confess my way of Reasoning to be very unhappy, if it is justly Rated by this Writer: It is thus; *Because the believing Galatians were adopted Children of God, when Paul writ his Epistle to them; therefore Paul was in the same State when he was a Persecutor, and an Enemy to God.* He might well ask, if there *is any good Divinity, or Reasoning in this Way of Arguing?* But, it may be, the impartial Reader will acquit me of such a Way of Disputing, when he considers, that my Design was to argue for Adoption before Faith, from the Million and Work of the Spirit upon the Hearts of the *Galatians*, as an Effect of their Sonship to God, and so applied it to *Paul*, it being no less true of him, than of them; and think him either ignorant of the Force of my Argument, or which is worse, highly disingenuous in hating it. Since the Communication of the Holy Spirit follows upon our Adoption, as an Effect doth its Cause; that Observation of mine is true, Regeneration doth not make us Sons; but; because we are Sons, we are regenerated; although he is pleased to call it a daring Assertion. Nor are these Words opposite to it: *But to as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God* (John 1:12, 13.): Which intend not Adoption, but the Benefits arising from it: To Believers Christ gives a Liberty, Power, or Right, to claim and enjoy such Privileges as are proper to Children. Neither is this Text; *And were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others.* These Words consider the Elect as in their natural Condition; thus they are under a Sentence of Wrath or Condemnation by the Law, which is not at all inconsistent with their Relation to God by Grace; as the Descendants of *Adam*, they are Children of Wrath; as in, and Members of Christ, they are the Children of God: Nor is it any Contradiction to affirm each of these Things concerning them at the same Time; because they are considered in a two-fold Respect, as what they are by Nature, and what they are by Grace, or as they have Christ for their federal Head.

He tells us, That *the Act of Adoption is the owning us to be Children*: But he is greatly mistaken; for, if that is Adoption, it is repeated as often as the divine Spirit witnesses to a Believer that he is a Child of God, that is, God's owning him for a Son, and evidencing to his Conscience, that he stands in such a Relation to him: But the Act of Adoption is not reiterated, tho' the giving Evidence of such a

Relation is in infinite Mercy repeated. Adoption is an Act in God himself towards his People, it is not a transient Act upon them; and therefore is eternal, as all God's immanent Acts are. It is no other than an Act of his Will, or a gracious Resolution within himself to account them his Children, and to confer such Privileges upon them, as are suitable to the Nature of so great a Privilege. And therefore, I am very far from being scrupulous to affirm, that there is no Necessity for the Change that Conversion makes, in order to prepare us for Adoption; nay, farther, that Regeneration is so far from being our Meetness for Adoption, that it properly springs from it. The Elect are no less Heirs of regenerating Grace, prior to that Work upon their Souls, than they are Heirs of all future Supplies of Grace and Glory, by Virtue of God's eternal Will, that they shall be his Sons; which Act of the divine Will constituted them *Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ.*

I do not except against the Account he gives of Regeneration, and the Actings of a regenerate Person, as consequent upon such a Work in his Heart: That he thinks it supposes *a thorough Conviction of Sin, and of the Necessity of a perfect Righteousness, and an Apprehension of Christ as the only suitable Saviour*, I am glad to find. *But he is guilty of a great Mistake*, in thinking Adoption to be God's acknowledging the new-born Soul to be a Son or Daughter of his own begetting; that respects the sealing Work of the Spirit upon a Believer, and cannot be *Adoption itself*, as was before observed. The Scriptures which he mentions, to support his Assertion, carry no such Meaning in them; the one is, *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God* (Romans 8:14.) ; that is, says he, they, *and none but they*. This is too free Addition of his own words to the Apostle, (as he understands them), who lays down the Leading or Instruction of the Holy Spirit, as a certain Evidence of Adoption: If therefore, he had said, that none but such as are led by the Spirit have the Evidence of their Adoption, it would have been agreeable to the Apostle's Design. Neither do these Words militate with the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith: *Now, if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Romans 8:9.). Can this Author imagine, That Christ has no Interest in the Elect, before the Time of their believing? when they were given to him by the Father, he laid down his Life for them; they are called his People by the Father, tho' unwilling, or in a State of Rebellion against him (Psalm 110:3.); and are also acknowledged by Christ himself to be his, even while in that State: *Other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold, them also I must bring* (John 10:16.). Surely, he cannot thus think; these Things so clearly evince the Elect to be Christ's before the Time of their Regeneration: And therefore, it is not our Interest in

him, or his in us, that the Apostle intends, but the Evidence of that Interest.

The next Scripture which our Author takes Notice of, that is urged in favour of Adoption before Faith, is; *And not for that Nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the Children of God that were scattered Abroad*. Upon which he thus remarks; *If we should grant for Argument's Sake, that, by the Children of God, is intended all elect People of God, whether the uncalled, or unborn, as well as them that are called*. This he must be obliged to allow, not merely for Argument's Sake, but as the real Sense of the Words; for all those, whom Christ gathers together in one, are plainly designed by the Children of God: And therefore, the uncalled, and unborn of the Elect, are no less intended, than those who were living at that Time, and called by divine Grace. Yet, says he, *I suppose these Men will find no small Difficulty, to engage it on their Side; because this is a Prophecy: And it is well known, that the Nature of prophetic Writings it to speak often of Things to come as present, or past, by calling those Things that are not, as though they were*. As for Instance, we read in the 22nd Psalm, 16th and 18th Verses, (Psalm 22:16, 18.) of *our Saviour's Hands and Feet being pierced, as if past and over*. The Force of which Reasoning stands thus; Since it is usual in Prophecy to speak of Facts, that are to be accomplished hereafter, as if they were already done, we may nor conclude, from such prophetic Writings, that God, at the present, stands in Relation to the Elect; although such Characters are given to them, in those Writings, which are expressive of his Relation to them. If this Manner of Arguing be allowed of, we may deny, that Christ stood in the Capacity of a King to .the *Old Testament* Church, from his being so called in a Prophecy (to which our Author has Reference) that mentions his riding to *Jerusalem* on an Ass (*Zechariah 9:9.*); which, I presume, he will not think proper to do. Evangelical Prophecies contain Doctrines, as well as Predictions of future Events. Now, though we are not to conclude, that those Events, or Facts, are past and done, because the Prophecy is delivered in the present, or past Tense; yet, certainly, we may be allowed to conceive of the Doctrines, those Prophecies contain, as present Truths: Therefore, though this is a Prophecy, in which all the Elect at, called the Children of God, it is not to be objected to their present Adoption any more than Christ's being called a, King, in a Prophecy that relates to a future Fact, may be improved as an Objection to his present standing that Capacity. 'Tis not a little strange, that our Author should be unable to distinguish between Doctrines and Facts, as he seems not to do in his Observations here.

What he offers farther, concerning its being *as reasonable to attempt to prove, that Judas had actually sold Christ in Eternity, etc. as that the chosen Number were actually adopted in Eternity*, is altogether impertinent, and deserves little Consideration. If his Observations of this Kind are just, I allow, that I am very unhappy in my Way of Arguing, and must be concluded guilty of the greatest Absurdities: But, he may be pleased to observe, I maintain that Adoption is God's Act, and an Act of his Will, or within himself, and therefore must be eternal. Now, 'tis not a little unaccountable, that any should imagine, it is as reasonable to suppose the Acts of a Creature are eternal, as that God's immanent Acts are so. If this Author shall think proper to reply, I desire he would either allow Justification and Adoption to be immanent Acts of God, or else prove them transient Acts; or demonstrate, that, though they are immanent Acts, they are not eternal; every Thing short of this will be nothing to the Purpose. Let him shew us, that there is an Exertion of divine Power, in order to our Adoption, or that a transient Act of God is put forth, which gives Being to this Benefit, or else freely grant, that it is an Act of his Will only. He goes on to observe, that the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith, receives no Countenance from these Words; *This, my Son, was dead, but is alive again*: He imagines the Difficulties attending this Account of the Prodigal, taken as a Parable, are exceeding great; and also, that he is able to prove, that, if it is so to be understood, the Doctrine of Justification before Faith is *destroyed* by it (Luke 15:24.); which, I should think, might reduce him to take it in that View, in order to the Service of his Cause. One of the Difficulties he mentions is this; *If they understand by the younger Son, the Gentiles, and by the elder, the Jews; How will this comport with the believing Jews giving Glory to God, for his giving Repentance to Life unto the Gentiles?* This Difficulty as mutely removed by observing, that not believing Jews are intended, but pharisaical, self-righteous Ones; such as were offended at Christ's receiving Sinners, and eating with them. Another is started by him.: It is this; *If they will have it to be a Spiritual Life that is intended in the Text, then certainly it must refer to one who was formerly possessed of that Life, and so can only relate to a Backslider returned to his God, and to his Obedience; since the Text faith, that he is alive again; which supposeth, that he once, or before his Rambles, was alive.* I answer, a backsliding Believer loses not his spiritual Life, though his Liveliness and Vigour may be abated very much by his Backslidings; therefore, Believers cannot be intended. Besides, it may be truly said of Sinners upon their Regeneration, that they are alive again, who were once dead in Trespasses and Sins; because Regeneration is a Communication of spiritual Life to them: But it is not necessary to understand, that the Life they receive, is of the same Nature with

that which they lost; any more than it is, that the Life which the Saints will be possessed of at the Resurrection, when they shall live again, will be of the same Kind with that mortal and perishing one they now live in this World. If he has no greater Difficulties to raise against this being a Parable, it may be taken for one, as far as I am able to conceive; and, since the Prodigal was considered as a Son when dead and lost, it has a very favourable Aspect upon the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith.

Our Author is pleased to assert, that *Predestination is not Adoption*. True, the Act of Predestination is not Adoption, or our Relation of Sons to God; I never met with any who conceived it is. He adds; *Nor does it make them Sons, but is an Appointment to Sonship only, appears plain by Ephesians 1:5, Having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself*, This is too freely affirmed, and without any Proof; Adoption is to be distinguished into the Relation of Sons, and the Benefits proper to that Relation: It is frequently taken for the latter, as in these Words, *That we might receive the Adoption of Sons* (Galatians 4:5.); so also in these, *Waiting for the Adoption, to wit, she Redemption of our Body* (Romans 8:25.). The Saints are not in Expectation of becoming Sons to God, though they are of receiving that eternal Glory, which arises from their being Sons; according to the Words of the Apostle John, *Now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (1 John 3:2.). In Predestination we became Sons to God; because God's Will, that we should be his Sons, gave Being to that Relation; although it did not give present Being to us, or to the Privileges proper to Adoption, and is to be considered as an Ordination, or Fore- appointment, of our Participation of those great Immunities only. This is so far from militating with eternal Adoption, that it involves it: For Predestination to the Honour, Dignity, and Privileges of Children, supposes us to be so considered in that Act. That *Romans 8:9.* is not inconsistent with Adoption, has been already observed. He asks, If it is *agreeable either to Scripture or Reason, to call any of our sinful Race Children of God, before they are either born or begotten of God?* I hope it has been made evident from Scripture, that the Elect Part of the sinful Race of Mankind, are the Children of God before Regeneration: But, I think, Reason is not to be a Judge in evangelical Mysteries, which are above it; though, at the same Time, I affirm, that it is beyond the Ability of this Author to prove this Doctrine to be contrary to Reason.

I have one Thing more to take Notice of: It is this; *Can they be Members of Christ, and yet barren of all Good, but fertile in all*

*Evil? Can this be, when our Lord informs us, that all fruitless Branches are so far from being respected that his heavenly Father taketh them away? Does he then think, that the Elect, while unregenerate, or unfruitful, have no Interest in divine Favour and Respect? or, that God deals with them., as with formal, barren, and hypocritical Professors, who are only in Christ by Profession? This is not impartially to examine our Opinions by the Word of God, but plainly to contradict it; which acquaints us, that, because God *loved his People with an everlasting Love* (Jeremiah 31:3.), therefore he communicates Grace to them here, in order to Fruitfulness, and crowns them with Glory hereafter, as the certain Effect of the same Love.*

*To conclude, it will be of great Advantage to this Author in his Writing, if he replies, closely to consider the true Nature of the Subjects upon which he shall treat.* The Want of that, in this Performance, has occasioned him to be guilty of very great Mistakes, in stating the Opinions of those whom he opposes; in drawing such Consequences from them, that are *intirely foreign* to their *Nature*; and in advancing such Objections, as do not, *in the least*, affect the *Argument under Consideration*: Greater *Blemishes* than which, can hardly be thought to attend a Polemical Writer.

## SERMON 8

### THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION NOT DESTITUTE OF ARGUMENTS SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT IT

#### IN ANSWER TO A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, '*CHRISTIANITY NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT, etc.*'

*A Testibus dicemus secundum Auctoritatem, & Vitam Testium & Constantiam Testimoniorum — Cum multa concurrent Argumenta, & Signa, quae inter se consentiant, Rem peripicuam, non suspiciosam videri oportere. CICERO Heren. Lib. 2.*

*In this Age, great Liberties are taken with the Holy Scripture, in order to lessen its Authority, and bring its peculiar Doctrines into Disesteem.* The Penmen of it have been represented in the *most invidious Light*: Their Characters have been used in a most unjust Manner, and a *false Turn* has been given to almost every Thing they acted. All Rules of Decency, Good- Manners, and Justice, due to the Memory of the Deceased, have been violated, by Gentlemen, whose highest Pretensions are, to Politeness, good Sense and Honour: And if we were to be determin'd, in our Opinion concerning them, by what they say of themselves, no doubt could possibly arise in our Minds: respecting the Justness of their Claim, to the beautiful Characters they profess to be enamour'd with, viz. *rational, polite,* and *ingenious* but if we may be allow'd Freedom of Thought and Enquiry on our Part, in making use of that Liberty, we can't fail of discovering, that they are not the Men, they are *extravagantly fond* of being accounted.

*The Author of Christianity not founded on Argument does not indeed proceed altogether in this Method; but it is his apparent Design, to prove that we are Christians, without being able to assign any convincing Reason why we are so, and that Christianity is really destitute of Arguments sufficient to support it.* How he succeeds in this *laudable Attempt*, I purpose, under the Assistance of him, whose the Scripture is, to impartially weigh and consider. And I promise him all the Advantage that a Searcher after Truth can desire: I will not crave more in Favour of Revelation than, I presume, he will readily allow in everything else, and leave him to determine, why that which is thought a proper and rational Evidence of Truth and Fact, in any Thing but Christianity, must not be so esteemed, where that is concerned.

I freely grant him, that Reason is to judge of the Truth of Revelation, and that when rational Proofs are not to be produced in Favour, of

any *pretended* heavenly Discovery, its no better than Enthusiasm, to be persuaded of its *divine Original* Farther, I allow that Reason is to judge of the Terms and Expressions, used in that Revelation, which it hath been the Pleasure of God to afford to Men. And surely it is just and proper, to interpret the Language of Scripture, agreeable to those Ideas, which are commonly intended to be conveyed by it, when we use the Words and Expressions of which it consists.

**First. This Writer strenuously contends that Christian Faith cannot be rational.** Several Things he advances against it.

*We are required to think all alike.* This he supposes is impossible; but I am of Opinion that it is far from being so, that, on the contrary, it is very practicable. If we consider what is necessary to Unity of Sentiments among Christians, how different soever their Capacities are, we shall easily discover, that it might reasonably be hoped for. The Scripture contains the Sum of what they are required to believe, and if the Word of God, which is the only Rule of their Faith, in its Terms and Expressions was duly attended to, and their *natural* and *obvious* Interpretation, was freely allowed of by all, there would not be any *material* Difference among Christians.

For Instance, the holy Scripture affirms that God is one, and that he alone is to be worshipped. *The Lord thy God is one Lord. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Farther, it as expressly requires us to worship three, Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Commission given to the Apostles, to teach and baptize (Matthew 28:19.). Hence it is easy to see, that Unity of Sentiments, in this Doctrine, upon the Evidence of Revelation, relating to it, is no difficult Matter: It is as easy, as to understand, that in Numbers, one is not three, and that three consist of three times one. It is not difficult to discover, that there is but one God, and that these three, Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one only living and true God. The Scripture doubtless, has a proper and determinate Sense, and that Sense certainly is, what the Words and Expressions of it properly import; and therefore, when Christians are required to be *of one Mind* no more is design'd, than, that it is a Duty common to them all, to interpret sacred Writ, without any Force or Violence, and to readily allow, those Ideas to be true, which are therein express'd. If this was done, it seems evident to me, even to a Demonstration, that very little Difference in Opinion would be found among them. And such is the Language of the Bible, that a Reader of ordinary Capacity, and unfurnished of Learning and Science, may understand it, and form a true Judgment of its Doctrines.

*Men are threatened into Consequences,* says he. If by Threatening, he means human Threats of Punishment, in case they form not their

Judgments, agreeable to the Opinion of others, as that is foreign to the true Nature of Christianity; I have no Concern with it, shall not defend, but condemn it, as much as himself. But if he intends the divine Expression of Displeasure, in Case Men disbelieve that Doctrine to be true, which they can't but know, is agreeable to the Language of Scripture, and is the proper Import of the Words and Expressions, It uses, it is highly just. For surely if God condescends to reveal his Will to Men, and addresses them in such Language, as is in common Use among them, and which they are capable of understanding, it is nothing unreasonable to threaten them with Punishment, and actually inflict it, if they refuse to believe, that when he speaks of one, he means as he speaks, and that when he speaks of three, he intends as he expresses himself.

He observes, *that we are baptized into Christianity when we are Infants, and know nothing of the matter*. As I think this Practice not agreeable to Christianity, and can't but esteem it an Innovation, I shall not say any thing to it. Let them defend it whose Practice it is, if they are able.

*Praying for Improvement in Christian Knowledge, he thinks inconsistent with a Conviction of the Truth of Christianity, upon rational Evidence.* Is Prayer then needless, where we are to exercise our reasoning Powers? It is by our Faculty of Reasoning, that we discover the Difference between Right and Wrong, Truth and Falsehood. Now is it an improper Thing, to pray to God, to bless the means, which in Providence he hath afforded us, of the Conviction of our Duty, for our Increase in the Knowledge of it: And to pray, that our corrupt Habits and evil Inclinations, may not influence us to act a Part, for which our Consciences would certainly condemn us? Is it then preposterous to offer him our Praises, for the good Influence our Knowledge, under his Providence, has over our Lives, to make us virtuous, wife and just in our Conduct? Of this Opinion indeed was *Cicero*, and some other Philosophers, and also Poets-But this immediately strikes at the Root of all Religion, not only revealed, but also natural, and perhaps, by so much the more, it may gain the Approbation of this Infidel.

Says he, *The rational Christian, whoever be he, must have originally set out a Sceptic, and hesitated for a Time, whether that Gospel were true or false.* But why is this necessary, is there nothing, that we rationally believe, but what we doubt of the Truth of for a Time? If so then let me become a Sceptic in some other Matters, besides Christianity. For Instance, let me doubt whether Language had the same, and not a contrary Meaning, in the Times of *Plato, Cicero and Epictetus, etc.* as it hath now, and call upon this Man to prove it had the same, if he is able: This I assure him is done

with a favourable View to those Philosophers, and he may thank me for it, because if we fall into the Opinion, of a Change of Language, *Plato* and some others may be defended from allowing the detestable Practice of the promiscuous Use of Wives, and *Cicero* may be acquitted of Pleading for Obscenity and Uncleanliness, and by this means *Epictetus* may be cleared of encouraging Dissimulation and Hypocrisy in the Worship of God. And therefore I should think this Gentleman, who it is probable has a great Veneration for these extraordinary Men, may consider this as a happy and ingenious Thought, and deferring his Thanks. But the Mischief is, if it should be allowed, that Language had in those Times a contrary Meaning to what it now hath, then we must understand those excellent Philosophers, to recommend Vice, when they condemn it, and to condemn Virtue when they extol it. Then it will follow, that in their Opinion, not the wife and virtuous Man is happy, but the Fool and the Knave. Then we may prove, that when they deliver the best Sense, they express the greatest Nonsense. This would lead us to conclude, that *Xenophon* thought God knows nothing of Things part, nor present, nor Things to come. Again if Doubting is necessary to rational Belief, then why may I not doubt, whether it is unlawful to take away this Man's good Name (if he has one to loose), whether it is unlawful to deprive him of his Property, or even of Life itself? Why should I think, that Slander is a criminal Thing, or that Theft is unjust, or that Murder is sinful, before I have examined upon what Principles I am to view these Actions in such a Light? And, if while I am undetermined in my Opinion, and am only upon the Enquiry, I should do either or each of these Acts against him, why should I expose my self to Censure and the Penalty of the Law, for doing what I have received no Conviction, is criminal, but so far as I can discover, is, if not virtuous, at least indifferent? Farther then, why may I not doubt, whether there is a first Cause of all Things, whether there is indeed a God, and if, while I am in Scruple, (which by the Way may be the whole of my Life) I deny him all Honour, Worship and Adoration, surely I am nothing Criminal, in this Matter, for however evident it is in itself, that the World rose not into Being, without the Exertion of an infinite Power, I am uncapable of seeing that Evidence; and therefore, it is nothing at all to me, and by Consequence, I may lead my Life, without any Fear of God, without paying him any Honours, or Desires of his Favour and Protection, and be perfectly innocent all the while.

To proceed no farther in this wild and extravagant Manner of speaking, as there is, a rational and irrational Belief, so there is a rational and irrational Doubting. If it be the Character of a Sceptic, to doubt without Reason, whatever he may think of it, he excels not in Wisdom and good Sense the Enthusiast, who believes without

Reason. One is as irrational as the other. And to speak freely, the Sceptic is that in Doubting, which without Reason, he charges upon the Christian in Believing, not the wife and understanding Man, but the foolish and unreasonable one. To doubt whether there is any Difference, between Right and Wrong, Truth and Falsehood, Virtue and Vice, whether Right, Truth and Virtue are amiable, and Wrong, Perfidy and Vice are monstrous and evil, will hardly be allowed rational, and if not, then there are some Things rationally believed, where Doubting cannot reasonably take the least Place. And question not, but Christianity will appear to have such Evidences and Arguments in its Favour, as will necessarily oblige every rational and unprejudiced Enquirer, to allow, that no Doubt can reasonably be admitted concerning Its Truth and great Importance.

He objects that, *Morality is of no esteem without this Christian Belief*. In answer to which, I observe, that Virtue and a good Life, are certainly very advantageous, a Person who indulges not to Pride, Coveteousness, Uncleanliness, Malice and Revenge, will not be attended with the uneasy Consciousness of having so done. But if Men-actually are defective in Morality, if they still are not what they ought to be, if they have in any Instances, acted what they ought not to have done, they are justly liable to the *awful* Resentment of that God to whom they are, accountable in their Conduct in all Things. And, if Men in Fact are such in their Behaviour, either thro' Defect in Duty, or in acting contrary to it, as that they on account thereof, deserve the Displeasure of why should it be thought unreasonable, that they are not accepted and rewarded by him, for an Obedience, which is allowed to be deficient and stain'd with Guilt? If indeed, any Man, this Writer for *Instance*, is as pure and regular in all Things, as he ought to be, I am free to grant he will not be condemn'd, but be approved by his Maker, and receive Happiness from him. But if he is not the Man he ought to be, in every Branch of his Conduct, he will find nothing contrary to Goodness or Justice in his Condemnation.

Here he seems to discover a Dislike of expecting Pardon, alone through the Mediation of Christ, if Revelation had not recommended that Doctrine to us, I suppose this Author would not have represented it as destitute of Arguments and Evidences, sufficient to support its divine Authority. In this Place he also observes that we may not live long enough to go through with a proper Enquiry, into the Evidences of Christianity, and that, that may prove of fatal Consequence. Prodigious Labour, great Pains and long Study it seems, are necessary to a rational Belief of Christianity! Labour as great, as to learn the Import of the Terms, God, Sin, Punishment, Saviour, Mediation and Suffering, to which how few are equal!

Labour as difficult as to discover, that none but God can foreknow the free Actions of Men, and declare the Parts they will act, Centuries of Years before they exist, that none but God is able to alter the Course of Nature, raise the dead to Life, and work Miracles of the like kind. A Talk attended with as great Difficulty, as discovering that Men existed more than seventeen Hundred Years ago, and what Proof can be given of that, which may be thought a proper Foundation for a rational Belief of it? Extraordinary Labour this, doubtless! to which every Man of common Sense is equal, and may, and must, be assured of the Truth of Christianity, if he exercises Reason, the very Moment he takes into Consideration the Evidences of it, upon such Testimonies, as he would believe any else in the World, better Testimonies than which, he has not, to found his Belief upon, that the World existed, so long a time since, as Christianity is supposed to have been introduced into it.

*Few Men, says he are qualified for Reasoning.* This Writer would doubtless be esteemed of the Number of the happy Few, who have this rare and uncommon Qualification. He is able, by his superior Penetration to discover that Works proper to God, are not clear and sufficient Proofs of the Exertion of his Power, that Predictions of the Parts Men Will act Hundreds of Years before their Appearance on the Stage of Life, which he only can be acquainted with, is no infallible Evidence of his conveying to us the Knowledge of his Will. He is able to prove, by his admirable Talent of Reasoning, that we have no certain Ground to believe, that there ever were such Men in the World as *Alexander*, *Plato*, *Cicero*, or *Julius Caesar*: Nay, that it is a Thing disputable, whether the World is two Centuries old, for we have it only upon Report and Hearsay, which are very fallible and uncertain Things. And if indeed the World is of such Standing, as the Times in which these Men are supposed to have liv'd, he can teach us, that it is uncertain whether Language has not passed under an entire Change, that those Terms which now stand for Virtue might then mean Vice, and these Words which now express Valour, might then be used to express Cowardice, and therefore, we learn from this accomplished Reasoner, that it is uncertain, when we read *Plato*, or *Cicero*, *Quinius Curius*, or *Caesar's* Commentaries, whether we are to understand them of recommending Virtue or Vice, whether *Alexander* was a Coward, or a bold and resolute Man, whether *Currius* and *Caesar* speak of Flight or of Victory. Rare Discoveries these indeed, and truly worthy of a Free-thinker or Infidel.

*The Reasonableness of Religion in Speculation nothing to the purpose, says he: It is one Thing whether a Proposition be indeed true in it self, and another whether a Man be bound to apprehend*

*and believe it.* A Man is bound to believe where doubting is unreasonable, for Diffidence is unsupported by Reason, is as irrational, as Faith without Evidence, and Foundation. And with Respect to the Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Revelation, they are such, as admit not of rational doubting. Works, which men really must and cannot but know, to be truly divine: And discoveries of future Events, which depend on the free Actions of men, are incontestable Proofs of a heavenly Appearance and Instruction: And if we have such Evidence, of Works of this Sort, being performed, and such Discoveries being made, as is thought *sufficient* to support us in the belief of other Facts done, as long a Time since, it is here doubtless, altogether as *valid* and *sufficient*, and it is not Reason to scruple that Evidence, but downright Madness and Obstinacy. Besides, no uncommon Degree of Knowledge and Improvement, are requisite to enable a Man, to discover that, interrupting the Course of the sun, or of the Earth, is a Work proper to him, who gave Motion to the one, or to the other; whether it is a Work truly divine and proper to God, the Fountain of Life, to raise a Person from the State of the Dead. A Man must as certainly, and as soon be persuaded of this, as that God formed the World, and upholds the Frame of Nature.

Says he, *The ablest and best of Men are disqualified for fair Reasoning, by their natural Predjudices.* How! yes, how! The ablest and the best Men disqualified, etc. I ask how Man came to be *rid* of all his natural Predjudices and Prepositions, is he so happy? Why then may not some others also enjoy that Happiness? Does he think, that he is the only Person in the World who possesses this most desirable Privilege? After this, surely, we may credit him, if not our Savior, or his Apostles. Here is a Man divested of all Predjudices, the thing which prevents the *ablest* and *best*, of Men (well then he is *not* of that *Number*) of finding Truths: That to believe a doctrine attested by *supernatural* Works to be true, is sound and credulous: That to yield an assent to the Truth of Facts; which all the Reason we have, dictates to us are *indisputable*, upon the Evidence afforded us in Confirmation of those Facts, is unreasonable. In short, let us give up ourselves to the Instruction, of this *singularly* happy Man, and let him enjoy an Honour, which the *ablest* and *best* of Men, because of their natural Predjudices, have no just Claim to *viz.* to be esteemed *fair* and *impartial* in Reasoning. He is no doubt an Interpreter of Ten thousand. Had he not conceal'd his Name, what Honours would have been paid him, and what *humble Submissions*, would have been made to him! How in the World came this non-such Man to affect Secrecy? If thro' Humility, he is more modest, in my Opinion; than he is discerning, whoever he be; but I don't take it, that this is the Fact: I rather think somewhat else, *viz.* a

Consciousness of endeavouring to shock the Christian in his Faith, upon Grounds, far from being *rational or just*.

*A rational Faith when attained would not answer the Ends.* He instances in several Things, *It would not work Miracles.* A mighty Discovery! Who ever thought that a Persuasion of the Truth of Christianity, upon the most reasonable Conviction, would enable a Man to perform miraculous Works? Christianity requires it not, suggests it not.

*It would prove too cold.* This is also granted without any Prejudice to the Cause of Christianity.

*Too changeable.* That some have altered in their Sentiments, with relation to very important Doctrines the Christian Religion, is well known; and it is equally well known, that they have so chang'd, without reasonable Grounds and Motives: As did *Dr. Whitby*, to whom this Writer has Reference.

*Would not administer that Spirit of Comfort, in the Reflection.* This is freely granted.

*Not of Force, sufficient, to command the Passions.* This is also readily allow'd.

*Much left to suffer Martyrdom.* This is not denied. But what are all these Things to the Point in View? What if a Persuasion, upon the most rational Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion, will not influence a Person to all, or any of these Things: but something must be superadded to that Persuasion, is this any Proof, that the Belief of Christianity, is without rational Ground and Evidence?. Because Men act not up to their Principles, is that to be objected to the Reasonableness, of the Belief of those Principles? A small Degree of Reason, far less to be sure, than this Author is Matter of, will enable a Person to discover the Absurdity of such an Imagination.

*Secondly. This Writer undertakes to prove, that Christ and his Apostles, never proceeded in this Method of giving rational Evidence of the Truth of those Doctrines they taught, but constantly required Men to believe without it.*

Before I enter upon the Consideration of what he offers, on this Head, I desire it may be carefully observed, that those Things which were Proofs of the divine Mission of Christ, or of his being a Teacher come from God, ought to be allow'd Proofs of the Truth of those Doctrines he delivered: And that if his Apostles failed not to give full Evidence, of their having a heavenly Commission to teach, it is Unreasonable, not to allow that Evidence to be a Proof of the

Truth of those Points of Doctrine they inculcated. Now Christ gave the fullest Proof of his divine Mission, such as would not admit of the *least reasonable* Doubt. He proves it by the Writings of the Prophets, who all spake of him, of his Family and Birth, of his Circumstances and Wisdom, of his surprizing Works, of his Sufferings, Death and Resurrection, all which Particulars were exactly fulfilled in him, and therefore, were evident and undeniable Proofs, of the extraordinary Mission of those Prophets, as well as of the divine Mission and Authority of our Saviour himself. Again, he confirms it by his Works, the miraculous Works which he performed bore witness of him, he healed the sick, gave Sight to the Blind, cleansed Lepers, cast out Devils, and raised the Dead to Life; which were the Works of such a Nature, as could only be effected by *divine Power*, and therefore, *not to be performed* by a Person who had not a divine *commission*. To these Works Christ appeals, and urges them as Proofs of his being sent by God, both with the Jews and with his Disciples. With the Jews, *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not: But if I do, tho' ye believe not me, believe the Works: That ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* (John 10:37, 38.) In the same Manner he reasons with his Disciples: *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the Works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me: Or else believe me for the very Works sake.* (John 14:10, 11.) Since our blessed Redeemer gave abundant and unexceptionable Proof, of his being clothed with divine authority, is it reasonable to think he was *too assuming*, when he *taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes*, who were *not invested with such heavenly Powers?* Surely not. And since his disciples had clear and full Evidence, of his divine Mission, was it unreasonable to expect, that they should readily assent to the Truth of what he taught: And were they not justly blamed for not believing him to be the Person, they had the highest Reason to conclude he was? Christ's reproving them for Incredulity, when they had all reasonable and sufficient Ground to believe, is objected to the Clearness and Sufficiency of the Evidence afforded to them, in order to the Faith. And if they had appeared forward of Belief, then, no doubt, this Man would have represented them, as *credulous*, and disposed to believe, without a *solid* and *substantial* Ground for Faith, and have argued that, for that Reason their Testimony is less deferring of our Notice. — This Man's Sneer at the Disciples of our Lord, how much soever he may be delighted with the *fine Turn of Wit* it contains in it, is as *bold* and *impious*, as 'tis *low* and *trifling*: It is this, *they knew nothing of Reasoning, it was quite out of their Element; they had had their Education on the Water, and tho' they understood their Trade so far as to be well versed in mending their own Nets, would go near it is likely to be entangled themselves,*

*when they had to do with the figurative ones of sophistry or Syllogism.* The Art of Logic is doubtless of Use in Reasoning; but that Men know nothing of Reasoning, who have not made themselves Masters of that Art, is an Observation, that a Man of the least Degree of good Sense or Modesty, would even blush to make. But why does this Man mention Sophistry? I hope he don't think that every Syllogism is a Sophism; if he does, he is not much better acquainted with Logic, than the most credulous Christian he despises. Sophisms either express what is not true, or less than is true, or more than is so, and therefore, Truth is not to be taught or demonstrated by Sophisms; and by Consequence, a Teacher of Truth only, as our great Lord was, can't be supposed to make use of Sophisms. Besides, Christ reasoned in the most clear and nervous Manner, infinitely better than this Man any where does; and if he pleases, he may, put his Reasoning into a syllogistical Form, if that will give him Satisfaction: Thus, Whatever God gives Testimony to, is true; he gives Testimony to my Doctrine by his Word and by Works, and therefore nay Doctrine is true. This is the Manner of Christ's Reasoning in John 5:36, 37, The Truth of the Proposition or Major must be evident to every Man, I suppose to this Author, and the Truth of the Minor cannot be call'd into Question, without giving the Lye to Christ, who is *Truth*; and at the game Time offering Violence to Reason, and therefore, the Assumption; I should think must necessarily be allow'd. Again, tho' the Disciples were Persons unprovided with Learning in the common Way, they did not remain illiterate, for by a Miracle they became such Linguists, as this Author may despair of ever being (Acts 2:4, 8, 9, 10.); which by the way is an evident Proof of their divine Mission. And Christ, who sent them to preach; was a *Mouth and Wisdom to them, which all their Adversaries were not able to gain say nor resist.* Farther, is it to be expected of a divine Teacher, that he shall evidence the Truth of his Doctrine, by Argumentation and, Reasoning from *natural Principles?* What Need. is there, for a Teacher, who proceeds in this Way only, to prove his Call to teach, by a pompous Shew of Miracles, since he advances no other Doctrines, than what he confirms by Argument and Logic? Is there any Necessity to excite Men's Belief of such Principles, by *supernatural Works*, which when clearly stated and fairly propos'd, they must needs know to be true by the Light of *Nature?* This surely is unnecessary. But, as our Saviour taught Doctrines, which, Reason could never discover, tho' they are not contrary to it, it was proper and necessary, that his Mission from Heaven should be well-attested, as it really was, that no Ground of Scruple might remain concerning the Truth of those Doctrines.

Moreover, since many of the Principles, our blessed Lord and his Apostles preached, were not discoverable by Reason, it is irrational to expect, that he or they should prove them by Reasoning and Logic: For that is arguing from some known and allowed Principle of Truth, to the Truth of Some Other Thing connected with it, dependent on it, and necessarily arising from it.

This Author charges Our Lord with being backward of explaining to his Disciples the Doctrine he taught, but without the least Foundation, for tho' he reprov'd them sometimes, for their Incredulity, as he very justly might, he was never wanting to favour them with farther Instruction and Explication, upon Application to him for that Purpose. Another false Charge this bold Man dares to exhibit against him, *viz.* that he expected *Conviction to precede Evidence, as the germs of a Favour consequently to be enjoyed:* Because in some Instances he asked Persons desiring a Miracle to be wrought by him, in their Favour: *Believest thou that I am able.* But how is this a Proof, that he expected Conviction to precede Evidence? He only call'd upon them to express that Faith they acted on him, supported by preceding Evidences of his divine Power and Mission. Farther, whereas he infers the same Thing, from the *Pharisees* requiring a Sign, and Christ's blaming them for it, he is quite beside the Truth, It by no Means appears, that Christ consider'd it Presumption and wanton Curiosity to expect Evidences of his heavenly Power and Authority, in order to believe in him, for many such he gave, to that End; But the Case in Fact was this, they wanted a Sign from Heaven (Matthew 16:1.), they would chuse the Sign themselves. Most unreasonable and impious! What if divine Power is exerted to confirm the Truth of any Doctrine, in working a great Variety of Miracles, shall Men refuse to believe, because such a particular Miracle is not wrought, as they desire, and take upon them to dictate to the Almighty what Sort of Wonders he shall work, if he gains their Credit? Well might our Saviour call them an *adulterous Generation*, for this daring Presumption and Impiety, Yet let it be observed, that our Lord gave at the same Time, Assurance of such a Sign, Which is an unexceptionable Proof of his divine Misson, *viz.* his Resurrection from the Dead, which was attended with an Appearance of Angels from Heaven.

We now come to the Apostles: This Writer might have spared every Word he here expresses, He observes they had *not Leisure*, nor *Qualifications* for Reasoning. And what then, if they' had not Leisure nor Qualifications, for doing what it was not their Business to do, no Damage will thence arise to the Cause of Christianity. They brought Doctrines agreeable, to, and of which, Reason was capable of making some febler and less evident Discoveries. And

they discoursed of those Doctrines, in a much better Manner, than ever any Philosopher did, or than this Man, who despises them and their Writings, is able to do; and urged the Practice of *all* moral Virtues, upon the Command and Authority of God, and the Pain of his Displeasure, if Men did not; which Manner of treating on moral Subjects, is, I suppose, exceeding *disagreeable* to the Taste of this extraordinary Man. It is farther to be observed, that they taught some Doctrines, quite cut of the Verge of Reason, concerning God, and his Purposes, concerning Sin and its Consequences, and a Deliverance from all the dreadful Effects of it, by the Mediation and Death of Christ: Things out of the Reach of Reason, and which it could never have discovered; it is therefore irrational, to expect Demonstration from Reason of their Truth. What the Apostles had to do, as Teachers of Mankind, was to prove their heavenly Mission and Authority, which when done, as it actually and fully was done: For *God bore them Witness both with Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost*; they might lawfully claim a Right to be heard and credited, without Wrangling and Dispute. But this Person will not allow Miracles to be a sufficient Proof of Doctrine, *because*, as he is pleased to assert confidently enough, *they have Time out of Mind undoubtedly been performed in Favour of false Doctrines*. I find however incredulous the Author is, with Relation to Bible History, he is not so with Respect to other Histories, it requires, as he pretends, an extraordinary Degree of good Sense, and the Acquisition of a considerable Share of Learning, to be able to form a true Judgment of the Facts, recorded in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles: And they at most have only a. Probability of Truth; but other Histories are easily understood, and the Facts reported in them may be proved true, and relied on, without that labour'd Reasoning necessary to prove the Truth of those Facts related in the Holy Scripture. I must take the Freedom to tell him, that as he is a Sceptic, with regard to Revelation, I am so with Respect to this confident Assertion of his, I doubt of its Truth, and challenge him to prove, that *real* Miracles were ever wrought in favour of *false* Doctrines: Let him tell us of what sort, by whom, when, in what Place, upon whom, and before whom, they were performed. He who is so incredulous himself, where the Authority of Scripture is concerned, may surely allow another, not to take up with a Thing, upon his have Affirmation, without proper Vouchers. I am tempted to think, how reasonable soever this Demand is, he will excuse himself of the Labour, from a Consciousness of the Difficulty attending it. Let him not take *lying* Wonders for real and true Miracles, as here he does: *This, says he, the Scripture it self confesses, when it warns us of lying Wonders, and false Christs.* We see a Man of distinguished Capacity, and

singular Accomplishments may mistake, where the rude and unpolish'd would not, he takes false Christs for the true Christ, and lying Wonders, for real and true Miracles: If he does not, he argues most impertinently. He is speaking of true Miracles, the Scripture speaks of *lying* Wonders, of Things that seem to be of an extraordinary Nature, but are not in Fact: what they seem to be. But, because *lying* Wonders and feigned Miracles, may be performed by Imposters and false Teachers, it by no means follows, that *real* and *true* Miracles, may, such as were wrought by Christ and his Apostles. *Lying* Wonders may be done by *lying* Teachers, but *true* Wonders can *only* be effected by Teachers of Truth, in Confirmation of their Doctrines. I can no more believe, that God would exert his Power to work Wonders, to confirm a Lye, than I can think, he is able to express a Falshood, the *former* seems to my Understanding, as *irrational* as the *latter*, and as much contrary to the Rectitude and Truth of the divine Nature. Next follows a very extraordinary Observation, in our Author's Performance, *viz.*, *The Miracles of Christ and his Apostles*, says he, *were natural Effects of Gospel, Benevolence*. And what then, do they lose any thing of their Force, because of that? What, because they were Works of Mercy, as well as of Power, is the Evidence they afford less clear and shining? It may be it would have greatly gratified this Writer, if the Miracles of our Saviour and of his Apostles had been of a contrary Nature, if Men had been rendered miserable instead of being made happy: If they had been delivered into the Hand of Satan to torment and rack them, instead of being rescu'd out of his power, if they had been kill'd instead of being raised to Life when dead: I say perhaps, Wonders of such a Sort would have highly gratified him, that he might have had an Opportunity of objecting to the Christian Religion, as introduced with Cruelty and Vengeance, and not suitable to the Goodness. of God, and therefore not likely to be any Religion supported by his Authority, Let this Man perform Works of the same Nature, and display the same Benevolence as Christ and his Apostles did, in healing the sick, giving Sight to the Blind, cleansing Lepers, and raising the dead to Life, if he is able, and I will acknowledge him to have a better Title to being credited in his *bold* Assertions, than at present, I can persuade myself, he has a just Pretension to.

Again, he observes, *especial Care was taken not to have them made public*. Our Lord then was not ostentatious and ambitious of popular Applause. So far sure he may be intitled to the Characters of *humble* and *modest*. It had been happy for this Man, if in any Degree, his Temper and Conduct had given him a Claim in Characters like these. But, what this Person aims at, in this Observation, he will never be able to prove, *viz.* that our Saviour did not work Miracles, in the

Presence of a sufficient Number of Men, to give an undeniable Testimony to their Truth: For various of his Miracles were done in the Presence of many Witnesses, yea in the View of his Enemies, and they were obliged to confess the Truth of them; that is to say, such of his Miracles, as he intended should stand in the Face of the World, for Proofs of his Authority and heavenly Powers. And his forbidding those on whom miraculous Cures were wrought in private, spreading them abroad, is an Evidence, that he was resolved the Proof of his divine Power and Authority, should not rest on Facts, which, on Account of their Secrecy might be disputed; but on such Facts, as were well known and might be attested, beyond all Possibility of Contradiction. Farther, he remarks that, *seeking them was discouraged, and instances in Herod.* This is recorded in Luke 23:8. If an extraordinary Person appears in the World, and gives Proof of his heavenly Mission, in the Presence of many Witnesses, shall it be Matter of Charge against him, or thought a Defect in the Evidence of his Authority, if he will not satisfy the vain Humour and Curiosity of every one who shall expect it, and take upon him to demand it? Is it fit that infinite Wisdom should be directed by the unreasonable Will of Man, and Almighty Power be called forth to work Wonders, to gratify the Curiosity of every impertinent Seeker of Signs. Apprehensions of this Sort, cart only be agreeable to such kind of Men as this Writer as, who have less of Reason than Incredulity.

His principal Objection is still behind, and he seems to expect its Weight will bear down all before it, 'tis this: *Miracles are no longer Evidences of the Truth of any Doctrine than they are continued: Nor, to any other Persons, than those who see them.* By Age, it seems they lose all their glaring Evidence, and by Time intervening the whole of their Force sinks and vanishes. Fine Reasoning indeed and suitable enough to a Freethinker, *i.e.* a Man free from Prejudice it may be in every Thing except Religion, wherein, in an especial Manner he ought to be: But, in that, deeply and perhaps irrecoverably sunk into the basest and most unreasonable Prejudices. This Person of free Enquiry, thinks it, I suppose, reasonable to conclude, that the World has existed more than seventeen Hundred Years, that such Men as *Alexander, Cicero* and *Julius Caesar* really were, and that the last named was assassinated by *Brutus* and others. And yet he cannot know, either of these Particulars, upon other or better Testimonies, than he may know the Certainty of the Miracles of Christ, which are related not only by his Friends, but by Enemies also. If we consider that the Disciples of Jesus were not credulous, but diffident, and with great Difficulty were persuaded who Christ was, and what was the true Nature. of his Work, and not without the fullest Evidence: If we consider, that they had nothing to

expect in embracing his Religion, (that is to say in this World) but Hatred, Reproach, Contempt and the most cruel Persecution, and Death itself: Things which Men don't usually chuse, except for some very important Reasons; and that they chearfully took up with the greatest Afflictions, and voluntarily submitted to Death, out of a religious Regard to their great and good Master, and to seal the Truth of their Testimony concerning him, and the Truth of those Doctrines, they had learned from him: If we consider that one of his Apostles was a Zealot in a Religion (as corrupted in that Age) *opposite* to his, was miraculously converted to it, readily embraced it, and bravely defended it, tho' he hereby expos'd himself to the greatest Dangers and Sufferings, to Perils by Sea, to Perils by Land, yea that Bonds and Afflictions attended him Wherever he went, and that at length he also sealed the Truth of his Testimony concerning his Lord, in whom he gloried, with the Loss of his Life: If we consider the Predictions of future Events Concerning the Nation Of the Jews, the Destruction of their Temple, and of their Polity and Government, and their Dispersion in the World; and the Predictions of future Events relating to the Church of *Rome*, in her Principles and Manners, delivered in the Gospels and Epistles; and the exact Accomplishment of those Predictions: I say if we consider these Things, we must surely be unreasonably incredulous, if we hesitate a single Moment concerning the Truth of Christianity. As I have before observed, it is as irrational to doubt without Reason, as it is to believe without Evidence. He who does the latter is an Enthusiast, and he who does the former, acts a Part equally absurd and unreasonable.

Now, what is it that the Sceptic with any plausible Shew, can object to the Evidences of Christianity? Were those Evidences few? No, but numerous. Were they performed in a Corner and in the Presence of Friends only? No, but publicly and in the View of Enemies, and the Truth of the Facts they attest, tho' they ascribe them to a wrong Power. Did the chosen Witnesses of Christianity gain Ease, Wealth, Honour, or Power, by their Testimony? No, it exposed them to Disgrace, Poverty, Loss of Liberty and Life it self; if therefore, they imposed upon the World, it was without any Temptation, nay even contrary to all their own Interests, (that is supposing their Testimony is false) and consequently we must think they acted not only a fraudulent, but a most foolish Part, and ran upon their own Destruction, without any thing of Moment, or Weight to invite them to it. This Man, inconsistent as he is., when he thinks that he shall gain some Advantage to the Cause of Infidelity, and do prejudice to the Interest and Truth of Christianity by it, can observe a rational conviction of the Evidences of the Christian Religion, will not enable Men to part with present Good and Pleasures, for distant

**Hopes and future Enjoyments:** And now he can be content to suppose, that the Apostles resigned all their Ease, Pleasures, and the Enjoyments of Life, without and future Good in Hope or Expectation. Is there a Disagreement in the Testimony of these Witnesses, do they contradict one another? No, their Relations of Facts agree in all material Circumstances. Was there any Age, in which the Christian Religion was unknown, and in which there were none of that Sect: Or can any other Account be given of their Rise and Spread, of their Principles, Conduct and Sufferings, sufficient to let aside the Account of them in all these Respects, which is transmitted down to us, in those Pages they esteem sacred? No. Do those Writings contain any thing absurd, that is to say, which contradicts our Senses, and is repugnant to Reason? Not so: They indeed inform us of some Things, we could never have known, without such heavenly Intelligence; but tho' those Things are undiscoverable by Reason, they are not repugnant to it. Are their moral Rules defective, do they make any Allowances for the Weaknesses and Foibles of Mankind, do they spare a darling Lust and permit Men to indulge a favourite Passion? No, but their Precepts of Morality are pure and strictly rigid, and such as might be expected to come from God. Were they immoral and dissolute in their Behaviour? No, they had a true Fear of God, a zealous Concern for his Glory, ador'd serv'd and obey'd him, even to the Hazard of their Lives. They were inoffensive, meek, patient, submissive, temperate, compassionate, just and humble in their Deportment. These are the true Characters of the Men this Infidel would persuade us, palm'd a Forgery upon God, and put a Cheat on the World, and to their Disadvantage in this State, and to their certain Destruction in a future one, if this Man in Reality will allow us to think that Men do and will exist after Death. What Reason therefore can be offered, why these Evidences and Testimonies of the Truth of Christianity should not be credited? No solid, no substantial one can be assign'd, and therefore he is not a wise Man, who withholds his Assent, when such Evidences demand it; he is not governed by Reason, how much soever he boasts of it; but Humour and the most unreasonable Prejudice.

Miracles are necessary to confirm a Doctrine, that is absolutely undiscoverable by Reason; but that when Miracles are done to that End, to suppose there must be a Succession of other Miracles, to support the Truth of those before done, is a wild Imagination. The Miracles already wrought, ought to be eternally allowed what they are in Fact, *viz.* sufficient Evidences of the Truth of those Doctrines they were perform'd in Confirmation of. The Intervention of Time changes not the Nature of these Evidences and Testimonies, as this Person urges it does; they were truly divine, and cannot become

human, Which he asserts they do. The utmost which can be pleaded by this Infidel, or any other on this Head, Is, that our Knowledge of these supernatural Proofs of the Christian Religion, is acquired in the same Way we get the Knowledge of other Facts done as long a Time since; but this proves no Change in the Nature of those Evidences. I find our Author's Logic fails him sometimes, as great a Proficient as he is in that Art. To believe Doctrines concerning God, his Purposes, and his Methods of Procedure towards offending Creatures, either in a Way of Penalty or Mercy, which Reason could not discover, or the Light of Nature could not point out to us, without any supernatural Evidences, or divine Testimonies of their being true, might I think, be very justly censured and pronouc'd Enthusiasm: But, to expect the Continuation of such Evidences, or to require a perpetual working of Miracles, in order to our yielding an Assent to those Doctrines, is *bold* and *impious*. It is sufficient that in our Age, we have such Proof that Miracles, great and wonderful, were once wrought to confirm the Truth of Christianity, as we allow to be full and convincing in any Thing else. And why that Proof may not be thought so here, I should be glad if this Infidel, or any other, would plainly tell us. Will this Man believe nothing but what he has seen, or does see? Does he think it any unreasonable Thing so to do? I imagine not. Does he think the World to be no larger in Compass, than what has fallen under his View? Can he persuade himself that more Men have not liv'd, or do live upon the Earth, than he has seen, or does see? Would he scruple to punish a Person, as the Law directs, that should privately steal his Property, upon the Testimony of credible Witnesses, tho' it was done in his Absence? Would he decline to bring a Murderer of a Friend or of a Relative to Justice, because he did not see the horrid Fact committed? I can't think he would be so incredulous, as not to prosecute such a Wretch, upon the Testimony and Evidence of others: That Kind of Evidence which he will not allow to be a rational Proof of a divine Testimony, being often given to the Truth of Christianity, will serve his Turn, yea far less, I doubt not, where Life is concern'd. And therefore, he is most unreasonable, not in grant, That that Kind of Proof is here rational, certain, and every Way sufficient. I cannot think that he would have his Manner of Reasoning take place in any Thing besides Christianity, or, that he would stand to the Consequences of it, in any one Thing else. *That seeing indeed is believing, has ever been allow'd Reasoning*, says he, *but that I am to believe a Thing because another says he saw it, and it is not in my Power to prove a Negative, and contradict him, is surely a very unprecedented and new fort of Logic.* Not so unprecedented and new, but this Infidel has acted, doth and will act upon it, in the most weighty Affairs which

can occur in Life, or else he really is a Noun Substantive, and differs from all the rest of Mankind.

*Thirdly. I now proceed to consider what he offers under his third Head of Discourse. Here he sets up for an Interpreter of Scripture, the Authority of which he disputes* and therefore, according to him nothing is to be proved by it. In this Place he labours exceedingly to render it ridiculous, and puts such a Sense upon the Terms and Expressions of the Word of God, as he thinks will effectually answer his Design. This Infidel contends, that the Scripture makes it the Privilege of every Man in the World to be infallible, that every Individual of Mankind, is immediately, and at once render'd perfect in heavenly Knowledge, without the Exercise of his reasoning Faculties, or taking into Consideration, what Discoveries are made in the Bible of divine Truths. But what if this Man mistakes the Scripture, and the Principle he advances, and palms upon it, is not there found; but is as contrary to that, as it is to all Experience and good Sense? Then his Sneer upon the Bible, and its holy Doctrines, Will appear as groundless as it is *impious*. And that this is the Fact, will quickly be evident.

The Word of God, is the Rule of our Faith, or it contains all those *important* Truths, which it concerns us to know, in order to Our Happiness; it is *able to make us wise unto Salvation*: For as it is the only Rule we have, by which we are to form our Judgments of divine Things, it is a perfect one. — It is plain and explicit, and suited to the Capacities of Persons unfurnished with Learning and Science. Its Doctrines, are *sublime* and *mysterious*, but the Language in which they are there express'd, tho' not destitute of the greatest Beauties, is easy to be understood: So, admirably are Simplicity, Elegance; and Majesty attempered together in the sacred Style. — It is the Duty of all Men to read and study the Bible; they ought to *search the Scriptures*, and search *them daily*, and *compare Spiritual Things with spiritual*, i.e. one Part of holy Writ with another. And it is their indispensable Duty, to pray that they may have Hearts disposed to conform their Conduct to the excellent Rules therein prescrib'd. — And therefore, no immediate Inspiration is to be expected from Heaven, to instruct us into the Knowledge of Truth, That is *absolutely unneedful*, according to the scriptural Account of Things: For every heavenly Truth we are required to believe and embrace, is therein discovered and proposed to our Enquiry: *To the Law, and to the Testimony: If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them*. Hence it is evident, that this Writer puts a forced and unnatural Sense upon various Texts, to introduce he knew to be absurd and false in Fact, and must of Necessity expose Christianity to the greater Contempt. The holy

Scripture gives us no Reason to expect: an *immediate* Revelation of any divine Truth to our Understanding, as he confidently affirms it does; but whatever we are oblig'd to believe, by Virtue of its Authority, is already therein reveal'd, and proposed to our *serious* Consideration and *free* Enquiry. Indeed we have need of divine Illumination, to enable us to discover the *Excellency, Glory, and Importance* of those *momentous* Doctrines, the Scripture teaches us, and which we, as Men, by a due Exercise of our reasoning Powers, without this Illumination, may discover are therein contain'd: This is graciously promised, and is certainly communicated, to whomsoever it is agreeable to the Will of God so far to favour. What then becomes of all the curious Observations of this Infidel, with Relation to a Conveyance of heavenly Knowledge, in an *immediate* Manner to the Soul? As of *universal Influence, of proper Weight, of instant Effect, of absolute Certainty, and such as Books could never furnish.* This is no Principle of Revelation: Nor will he ever be able to prove, that it countenances Enthusiasm, which he so eagerly charges it with, and with an uncommon Assurance palms upon it, to promote his wicked Design of bringing it under Disgrace. This is no other than a Notion of his Invention, and therefore, he is only exposing a Brat of his own fertile Brain. The Christian Religion is not in the least affected by all he is pleased to say upon this Head. The Infidel is guilty of the most flagrant Contradiction, when he says, *the Tender of this Conviction, greatly depends upon the Disposition of our Minds to give it Reception, for its Efficacy.* It seems after all, it is not an actual Conveyance of Light, to the Soul, but is only an Offer of it: Just now it was so strong a Light flashing into. the Mind, that it was of *instant Effect*, and bore away all Prejudices and Darkness before it. But by this Time it is sunk into a *bore* Tender of Knowledge, if Men will receive it. Can this Man expect to be in the least regarded, when he so egregiously trifles, and manifestly contradicts himself? Infidelity is a Crime, and may be so proved, but not in the Way he points out. If Men have the same rational Grounds to believe that Christianity is true, as they have that the World has existed so long a time, as that is supposed to have been introduc'd it, they must be guilty of Perverseness and Obstinacy, to call the Truth of it into question: And that they have such rational Grounds, is unquestionably Fact. That Men are culpable in embracing of Heresies is certainly true: For if the Scripture expresses its Doctrines, in Words easy to be understood, but Men will not allow them their proper Meaning, because they disrelish the Doctrine, they must in that case grant to be true; they act a very *criminal* Part; and this is really the Fact. — The Infidel speaks of the sudden Conversion of some Persons as a Thing *ridiculous*. But he ought to have proved, that those Conversions

were without rational Grounds; since he has not done this, he truly becomes what he falsely represents them to be, *exceeding ridiculous*. The *Samaritans* had just Reason to conclude that Person to be endued with heavenly Powers, who could give a Woman a Narrative of her Life, whom, till that Time, he had not seen, and with whom he had not before conversed. — The Writings of the Prophets plainly foretold the Sufferings and Death of the Messiah, and his Resurrection from the Dead, and therefore, the Disciples of our Lord, were culpable in not believing what they had such Means of knowing to be true, consequently they were justly reprobated by Christ for their Incredulity, notwithstanding all this Infidel offers to prove the contrary.

***The next Thing he labours to prove is that there is a Repugnancy between Religion and Reason.*** It is allowed that the Christian Religion contains Mysteries, which are above and not discoverable by Reason; such are the Doctrines of the Trinity, of the Incarnation of the Son of God, his Substitution in the Sinner's Room, bearing his Guilt and Punishment, *etc*. But neither of these Things is repugnant to Reason, nor will ever be prov'd opposite and contrary to it, by this Man, or any other breathing. It is no Prejudice to the Cause of reveal'd Religion, or Evidence that it is destitute of rational Proof, that Philosophers have opposed it, because they could not comprehend it. All that in Justice can be demanded to a rational Proof of its Doctrines, is, that it is a Revelation from God; that once prov'd, it is unreasonable to hesitate concerning the Truth of its Doctrines, how much soever those Doctrines may exceed our Comprehension. The Conduct of the Philosopher, who disbelieves Revelation, because he finds it contains Principles that transcend his Reason, speaks the Language of his Heart to be this: That if God will reveal his Will to Men, if he expresses more, or any other Thing, than what might be known and demonstrated, before and without this Revelation of himself, the Truth he expresses can lay no Claim to his Assent. This is the *impious Principle of Philosophy and vain Deceit*, which the Scripture warns us against. And hence arises all the Philosopher's Opposition to the Gospel of Christ. The holy Word of God contains nothing, teaches not any Thing *contradictory* to Reason, tho' it discovers some Things that Reason could not come at the Knowledge of, without this Revelation of them; which Things therefore, it is not to be expected should be proved by Argumentation, or Reasoning from such Principles, as the Light of Nature leads us to acknowledge are true. Nor is it to be thought strange, that revealed Religion should contain Principles mysterious and incomprehensible, since natural Religion obliges us to believe what we are unable to comprehend, *viz.* the eternal Existence of God, his Immensity and Infinite Knowledge: And the Production of

all Things out of nothing, by an Act of his almighty Power. But why do I mention natural Religion, when I am considering what this Infidel objects to revealed; since he seems to give very little Credit even to that? I have sometimes thought it is impossible, that any one in human Shape can be an Atheist: in Opinion but, perhaps, I may be mistaken in that: For this Infidel seems to apprehend that the Being of God, will not admit of evident and unexceptionable Proof: It seems to be a Question with him, whether natural Religion hath rational and sufficient Evidence to support it. I own, I hardly thought it possible, that a Creature possess'd of the lowest Degree of Reason, could advance any Thing so irrational. Dr. *Clarke*, it seems, by producing ingenious Arguments to prove the Being of God, has, in the Opinion of this Infidel, contributed to Atheism, and thrown Men into Doubting and Scruples about it; what Sort of Men they are, is easy to guess, such as this Man is, or who have as little Reason as himself, and really are a Disgrace to human Nature.

He thinks that *a Christian's Examination of Christianity* is absurd. But why must it be thought so? A Man has undoubtedly a Right to examine the Evidences of the Christian Religion; but then, as he may examine freely, I hope it Will be allo'd he ought to examine impartially, and admit those Evidences to be sufficient here, which he will not deny to be so in any Thing else, if such Evidences are here to be found, and that they are not this Infidel will never be able to prove. — *Infallibility* he makes a *necessary Qualification of a Christian Preacher*.

But very absurdly, for as the Preacher and the Hearer have one and the same Rule of Faith, the Hearer, tho' he may not be capable of expressing so well, and illustrating those Ideas of divine Truths, which he forms in his Mind, and discovers are contained in the Word of God, yet he is able to discern, when that Doctrine the Preacher delivers, is agreeable to the holy Scripture, for all divine Truths are therein express'd in such Language as he understands himself. And therefore an infallible Interpreter of this infallible Rule is unnecessary. Farther he asserts that, *Examination can't be under any Obedience*. Strange! no, what if the Evidences of the Thing examined are clear, full, and every way sufficient? Then a Man is not bound to believe, where his Reason demands a ready and firm assent of him. *What may be examined may be rejected*, says he, May it so? I hope not merely because it may be examined. The Opinion of the Being of God may be examined, but a Man is not at Liberty to reject it: And he must be a Fool that does. The Opinion of God's creating the World may be examined, or the Evidences of it may be enquired into, but it may not be rejected. The Opinion of the Immortality of the Soul may be examined, but it may not be

rejected; and a Man must offer Violence to Reason, if he will reject it. The Opinion that intelligent Creatures stand obliged to honour God and practice Virtue may also be examined; but it may not be rejected: Nor is it necessary a Man should doubt of the Truth of either of these things, when he begins to examine into the Evidences of them. Christianity may doubtless be examin'd; but it ought not to be rejected: For it hath such Evidences and Arguments in its Favour, as would certainly be allowed sufficient, to prove the Truth of any one thing else in the World. Neither is it necessary for a Man to become an Infidel, in order to his being a rational Christian: as it is not necessary to become an Atheist, in order to discover with Certainty the Being of God. And as a Man wou'd not be excusable in becoming an Atheist, when he examines the Evidences and Arguments of the Existence of Deity; so he would be inexcusable in becoming an Infidel, when he sets him self about the Examination of the Evidences of Christianity. And yet a Man can't be suppos'd to believe the Being of God without Evidence; nor the Truth of the Christian Religion without it. For as soon as a Man knows, what Idea the Words God and Deity stand for, so soon he must necessarily discern the Evidences of the Existence of God, and therefore, cannot reasonably admit any Doubt concerning it. And as soon as a Man can frame an Idea of what Christianity is, or understand what it means, so soon must he necessarily discover sufficient Evidences of its Truth, and by Consequence cannot reasonably be in doubt about it. I dare say, if a Man will but allow that to be sufficient Evidence and Proof here, which he will not deny to be so in any thing else, he will not, he cannot hesitate concerning the Truth of Christianity a single Moment. — And tho' we esteem the Religion of Jesus the most sacred Thing in the World, as we have nothing to fear from a fair Opponent, (if such it can possibly have) we are not against the most rigid (let it be but impartial) Examination, of the Evidences and Arguments on which we form our Persuasion of its Truth. Neither will we ever call upon the civil Magistrate, to *put a stop to the Reasoning of Infidels against Christianity*: For 'tis Pity but they should be allowed the free Exercise of the little Reason they have, and from which we know, no Prejudice can ever arise to the glorious Cause we defend, Yet we can't but wish (for their own sakes) that their Talents in arguing were better employ'd. — With Respect to what this Man observes, of its being the Opinion of Bishop Beveridge, *that a Conveyance of heavenly Light is necessary to a saving Knowledge of the Doctrines of Christianity*; it is a Truth which Revelation abundantly teaches us. A Man may know those Doctrines to be true, by the bare Exercise of his reasoning Faculties, upon the Word of God; but he cannot enter into the Spirit, Importance and Glory of them, without the Super-addition of

heavenly Light. This gracious Influence upon the Mind is not a Discovery of Truths which Men had not Means of knowing before, and which they could not by the Help of such Means discover without it. For those Doctrines, which under this benign Influence and heavenly Guidance, are apprehended to be of the greatest Importance, glorious, and every way worthy of their divine Author, are express'd in the holy Scripture, in such Language as Men may easily understand, and therefore may learn that those Doctrines are Truths, by a proper Exercise of their reasoning Powers, upon Revelation, without this Supernatural Light and Influence.

Let me instance in the Doctrine of the Deity of our Saviour. He is represented to have been, or existed in the Beginning, and is asserted to be God: *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1:1.). He is called *the mighty God* (Isaiah 9:6.), *the true God* (1 John 5:20.), *over all, God blessed for ever* (Romans 9:5.). *He hath ascribed to him those Perfections, which are incommunicable to a Creature, and are certainly proper to a Deity, viz. Eternity* (John 1:1.), *Immutability* (Hebrews 13:8.), *Omniscience* (John 21:9.), *Omnipresence* (John 3:13.), *Omnipotence* (Revelation 1:8.). He is affirmed to have *made all things*, and 'tis denied that *any Thing was made without him that was made* (John 1:3.). He is declared to have *laid the Foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens* are asserted to be the *Works of his Hands* (Hebrews 1:10, 11, 12.): Even in those very Records, which constantly make Creation a Work proper to God, and argue his Being, Power and Wisdom from it. He is propos'd as the Object of Worship, in those very Writings which throughout condemn the Worship of a Creature. *He is thy Lord and worship thou him* (Psalm 45:11.). *Again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the World, he saith and let all the Angels of God worship him* (Hebrews 1:6.). Christians are to be baptized into his Name εἰ το ὄνομα (Matthew 28:19.). Prayer is directed to him jointly with the Father (2 Thessalonians 1:16.). And of him Grace and Peace are implor'd (Ephesians 1:2.). Doxologies of Praise are ascribed to him (Jude 1:24.). And together with the Father he is adored (Revelation 7:10.). These Particulars concerning our Saviour are asserted in the Scripture, in Language, so plain, explicite and full, that Art and Criticism are not necessary to understand it. Much of both indeed are required to evade the Force of these clear Testimonies, in Favour of this fundamental Truth of the Christian Religion. And the Use Men of Letters make of both, to obscure the Light of these Evidences, only serves to shew us, that learned Accomplishments enable them to argue in such a. perverse and unreasonable Manner upon the Scripture, as a Man of Sense would even blush to do, upon

any human Writings in the World. But I suppose it is excusable to argue most perversely here, provided it is learnedly.

I desire to instance in the Doctrine of Atonement and Satisfaction, by the Death of Christ. He is said to have *bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree* (1 Peter 2:24.). The Lord *laid on him the Iniquities of us all* (Isaiah 53:6.). *For he hath made him to be sin, for us, who knew no Sin* (2 Corinthians 5:21.). Christ was wounded for our Transgressions he was, bruised for our Iniquities (Isaiah 53:5.). *The Messiah was cut off, but not for himself* (Daniel 9:26.). Our blessed Saviour was made a Curse for us (Galatians 3:13.). *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and he hath put him to Grief* (Isaiah 53:10.). *The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes are we healed* (Isaiah 53:5.). *He gave his Life a Ransom for many* (Matthew 20:28.). Our gracious Redeemer purges our Consciences from dead Works, in Consequence of *his offering himself thro' the eternal Spirit, without Spot to God* (Hebrews 9:14.). *Once in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself.* (Hebrews 9:26.). *Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own Blood* (d), *The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin* (1 John 1:7.). Christ has made Peace by the Blood of his Cross (Colossians 1:20.). He has made Reconciliation for Iniquity (Daniel 9:24.). Much more then being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him (Romans 5:9.). When we were Enemies we were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son (Romans 5:10.), He is the Propitiation for our Sins (1 John 1:2.). A Man who shall tell us, that Art and Criticism are necessary to discover the Truth of the Satisfaction of Christ, which is to clearly and explicitly declared, in these Scriptures, may with equal Reason tell us, that the Sun is not visible, when it shines brightest upon us, and we are unable to bear its dazzling Rays, and that a Telescope is necessary to discover it. Men of Learning have long endeavour'd, by Art and Criticism, to darken and hide from View the strong Light, which flows in upon us, from these and other sacred Testimonies, in Favour of this important Doctrine, but all in vain. Their Endeavours this Way, only evidence, that their Acquirements enable them to argue against the clearest Testimonies, which can possibly be given of divine Truths, that approve not themselves to their Likeing and good Opinion.

I beg leave to instance in the Doctrine of the Necessity and Efficacy, of the Operations of the Spirit of God, upon the Souls of Men, in order to their Regeneration and Sanctification. *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God* (John 3:3.). *No Man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him* (John 6:44.). *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law*

*of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7.) They who are in the Flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8.), Without Faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:5.). Who were born not of Bloods, nor, of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God (John 1:13.): Who of his abundant Mercy hath begotten us, again, to a lively hope (1 Peter 1:3.). Thro' Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God (Ephesians 2:8.). We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works (Ephesians 2:10.). For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure (Philippians 2:13.). Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done; but of his Mercy hath he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the holy Ghost (Titus 3:5.). Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began (2 Timothy 1:9.). I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these Things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto Babes: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight (Matthew 11:25, 26.). God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face, or Person of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6.). A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh (Ezekiel 36:26.). Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power (Psalm 110:3.). For thou also hast wrought all our Works in us (Isaiah 26:12.). And what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power, to us-ward, who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power; which be wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead (Ephesians 1:19, 20.). And you hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1.). The Evidence which these numerous Texts with many others, afford to prove the Doctrine of the Necessity, Efficacy, and gracious Effects, of the Operations of the Grace and Spirit of God upon us, has cost many learned Men great Pains and Labour, in Art and Criticism to obscure it; but altogether in vain. For like the Sun will shine thro' the thickest Clouds, they will ever be able to raise in order to darken and keep it from our Sight. Here again I must observe, that Art and Criticism are absolutely unnecessary to discover that shining Evidence. Persons of mean Capacities, and unfurnished with Learning and Science may discover it. Upon the whole, it is very apparent that, this Writer dreadfully abuses the Scripture, and puts a forced and unnatural Sense upon it, with relation to what it delivers concerning the heavenly Influence of the Spirit of God, upon the Souls of Men. That is not a Conveyance of*

the Knowledge of any divine Truths, which Men had not Means of discovering before, and which they were uncapable of knowing to be such: But by this Influence, they are enabled to see the Excellency of, and to discern the Goodness, Wisdom, Holiness and Faithfulness of God, which are therein displayed in the fullest Manner. To imagine that God now affords such Light, as will enable us to make Discoveries of Truths, not already revealed to us, in his Word, is real Enthusiasm; and has nothing to support it in the holy Scriptures: On the contrary, such a wild Conceit stands there awfully condemn'd But that he communicates Light and Grace, to assist us in our Enquiries into those Truths, he hath graciously been pleas'd to inform us of, in his Word, and by the Help of which, we discern the Glory of these Truths, is a precious Doctrine the Bible contains, and is at a great Remove from Enthusiasm, and is not in the least absurd or irrational.

***It is Time for me to recapitulate and sum up what I have before observ'd, and I must take leave to give the Reader this Infidel's Recapitulation revers'd:*** or to assert the contrary of what he does in every Particular.

'Tis evident that Men would very little differ in their Sentiments, relating to Christian Doctrines, if the Language of the Scripture, which is plain and easy to be understood, was interpreted in its obvious and natural Sense — That such Accomplishments, as require Time and Pains to attain, are not necessary to understand the Scripture, in the most momentous Points of Doctrine, it requires us, to believe That the Proofs of a Christian Faith are such, and so clear, and so full, that a Course of Study to apprehend them is not necessary: Those Proofs may be understood as soon as Men have learn'd to know, what Ideas the Terms and Expressions used in the holy Scripture stand for — That a rational Conviction therefore, of the Truth of the Christian Revelation, is not the Privilege only of a few Students and Speculatists — That there is a certain Connection betwixt the Notion of Duty, and assenting rationally to a Proposition well supported. The Reason is plain, a Man is inexcusable to disbelieve that which he sees evident Reason to conclude is true. — That tho' Arguments are but Motives to Assent, it is not a Contradiction to assert, that we are oblig'd to let them be conclusive, if they are clear and justly founded, and regularly drawn. — That there is not such a Complication of Circumstances to be determined upon, Consequences regularly drawn, and a summoning of Evidence in order to the Proof of Christianity, that should hinder the Certainty of the Event, in an impartial Enquirer, and therefore, it may be foretold and prescribed That the Proofs of Christianity are so evident, and of such Force, that they are calculated to produce an

Assent, from every Man, to whom they are proposed, as soon as understood. And those Proofs are of so easy and plain a Nature, that it is a Dishonour, to the Names of *Locke* and *Newton*, to suggest that Capacities like theirs, are necessary to understand their Force and Weight — That Christianity may not only be enforced, as a Fact, but it may also be prov'd true as a Gospel, in Virtue of such Arguments, as approve themselves to that Reason, of which all Men are proffess'd — That all Men have Leave and Right to examine the Evidences of Christianity, and determine of its Truth, as the Matter shall appear to their Reason; but it is to be observ'd, that those Evidences are such, that they must necessarily appear pregnant Proofs of its Truth. And therefore, by granting Men Liberty to examine these Evidences and Proofs, we are in no Danger of authorizing Infidelity in Form, and setting it upon the same Footing, in Point of Conscience, with the Profession Christianity itself, as this Author affirms we are. The Man has ill Success indeed, for he has not proved one single Point, with all these Pains and Labour. He might therefore, have very well spared the whole of his pathetic and moving Expostulation, with the *Oxonian*, whom he addresses, for it is entirely founded on Principles unprov'd and false; it therefore demands no Regard from me, or any other Christian, let the unreasonable Infidel, such as this Man himself is, pay his Respect to it, and make the best of it, he is heartily welcome.

# SERMON 9

## A Refutation of Arminian Principles, Delivered in a Pamphlet, Intitled, 'The Modern Question concerning Repentance and Faith, Examined With Candor, etc.,'

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

WORTHY SIR,

*My Opinion of your solid and accurate Judgment in divine Things*, and of your Candour and generous Disposition towards those who differ from you, in Articles not affecting the Fundamentals of Christian Doctrine, as well as of your firm attachment to the Truths of the Grace of God; *Determines me to give you, an Account of the Rise of the Controversy, relating to evangelical Repentance, and special Faith, being the immediate Duties of unregenerate Men*; an Account of my own Apprehensions with relation thereto, and my Thoughts of the Performance, intitled, *Th modern Question, concerning Repentance and Faith, examined, with Candour*. I hope, Sir, this Liberty, I take with you, will not be thought too bold or indecent, and as I desire to submit the whole to your Examination, which I am assur'd will be fair and impartial, the Result of your Thoughts, will be received with all that Regard, which your great Abilities, singular Modesty, Christian Charity, and pious Zeal for the Truths of Christ, may justly challenge, from one fully sensible of these your rare and uncommon Qualifications.

The Rise of the Controversy was this. A Lecture had been carried on for some Years, with great Success, in a Village called *Brigstock*, in *Northamptonshire*. Many young Persons were converted, among whom were several Relations of mine; upon hearing of which, I determined, that when I went into that Part of the Country, I would pay them a Visit, and accordingly I did. When I was with them, and the rest of the good Peopl

there, at that Time, I thought them some of the most happy Persons, I have ever had the Pleasure of converting with, in this Day of Lukewarmness and Division among Professors. The Conversion of these young People, was a happy Means of Revival to the elder Christians there residing. With Zeal and Fervour they attended the public Worship of God, on Lord's Days, tho' the Places where they had Opportunity of so doing, were five Miles distant from them, and but a few of them enjoyed the Convenience of riding. Upon their Return Home in the Evening, after a little Refreshment, they met

together in private; and Exercises of Prayer and Christian Conference, were carried on with perfect Unanimity, spiritual Affection and mutual Edification. Besides which, they had three or four of the like Evening-Meetings in a Week; but what is justly to be observed to their Honour, is, they diligently attended their Business, and the Management of the Affairs of Life: So well was their pious Zeal tempered with Prudence, and honest Industry. — Would to God, That that Harmony, sincere Love, and holy Zeal, had flourished among them to this Day. But, alas, oh unhappy Change! Now there are Divisions, Contentions and animosities fomented, among that once very happy Number of Christians. The Occasion of which, in short, was this: Some of the worthy Persons concerned in carrying on the said Lecture, had different Apprehensions about the Manner of addressing Sinners, with Relation to evangelical Repentance, and special Faith in Christ: I say about the Manner of it, for with Respect to the Necessity, Nature, Object, Author, and the genuine Effects of Faith, as far as I am able to learn, they were fully agreed. Some of the Lecturers were of Opinion, that special Faith is the immediate Duty of unregenerate Persons, who hear the Gospel. Others of them, apprehended, that unregenerate Persons are not bound to exercise this special Faith in Christ. But were fully convinced of, and constantly asserted and inculcated, the Necessity of Faith in Christ, and were not wanting in the Explanation of its Nature, and proper Fruits. This Matter, was at length controverted by the Pen, between two of the Lecturers, not without too much Heat on one Side, and a great many very ill and dangerous Consequences, were affirmed to follow the latter Opinion. This caused a Dissension among those serious Christians, some taking one Side of the Question, and some the other. At length, the Opposition rose to such a Height, in those who took the Affirmative Side In this Debate, that they formed a Resolution to set up another Lecture, in which Antinomian Principles were to be exposed, and this Opinion particularly. This Design was put into Execution; another Lecture was opened by Dr. *Doddridge*, who is well known for his remarkable Candour of Temper, and Catholic Sentiments: Which was therefore, thought very strange by many, who had not, as yet observed, that but a small Mistake, in those Persons who steadfastly adhere to Principles, which have heretofore been esteemed the Doctrines of free Grace, in Opposition to *Arminianism*, raises the *keen* Resentment of Persons, of great Reputation for their extensive Charity and Catholicism: When large Advances towards general Grace and universal Redemption are highly applauded, by those very pacific Gentlemen. That this Lecture was set up in Opposition to the former, Sir, you cannot doubt, when you are told, that it was proposed that the Gentlemen who carry it on, should come into the old Lecture, and

take their proper Turns, with the former Lecturers, to the End that Peace, Unity and Love might be still preserved, which it was apprehended might very well subsist, notwithstanding this Difference in Judgment, with relation to that particular Point: But this amicable and friendly Proposal, was not agreed to by those on the Affirmative Part. A Person of your Penetration and Impartiality, will soon discover; and as readily allow, on which Side Christian Love and Forbearance were attempted to be maintain'd.

**My Apprehensions, of the Point controverted, I shall very briefly lay before you, Sir, and submit them to your Enquiry and Censure.**

**I.** I apprehend, that *whatever* was, or would have been the Duty of Man, upon the Supposition of a Revelation, super-added to what he enjoyed in his Creation-State, is the Duty of Men in their fallen State, upon the said Supposition.

**II.** That Man in his perfect State was bound to love, reverence and adore God; and that Men in their lapsed State are obliged to these Acts, notwithstanding their present Want of Ability, in Consequence of the Fall.

**III.** That it was the Duty of Man in his primitive State, to believe the Truth and Importance of every Revelation, he should receive from God; and that it is the Duty of Men in their fallen State so to do.

**IV.** But with Respect to special Faith in Christ, it seems to me, that the Powers of Man in his perfect State were not fitted and disposed to that Act. My Reasons for this Thought are these:

The Communication of such a Power to Man, in his primitive State, would have been in vain; for there was no Necessity, nor Use of believing in Christ: in that State; and I humbly conceive, that Man was not furnished with a Power, the Exertion of which was unnecessary, so long as he should remain in his perfect State.

**1.** Because God could not require Man, while in a perfect State, to put forth such an Act, as special Faith in Christ is. The Reason is evident, this Act necessarily supposes a Dependence on Christ for Salvation, as Creatures lost and miserable in ourselves; but 'till Man was fallen and become miserable, he could not exercise such a Trust in Christ, as a Redeemer. And therefore, if it is supposed that God furnished Man, in a State of Innocence, with a Power of acting this special Faith in a Mediator, it must, I think, be allowed that he gave Man an Ability, which so long as he continued to possess it, he could

not require him to exert. Whether this is likely, I leave to your judicious and impartial Enquiry.

2. My third Reason is, special Faith in Christ belongs to the new Creation, of which he as Mediator between God and his People, is the Author, and therefore, I apprehend, that a Power of acting this special Faith in him, was not given to Man, by, or according to the Law of his first Creation.

3. It seems to me a very extraordinary Dispensation, that Man should be furnished with a Power, he could not exercise in his perfect State; and in his corrupt State be deprived of that Power, wherein alone the Exertion and Exercise of it can be necessary or useful.

The Substance of these Reasons, *Arminius* delivers in his Apology, Article the Nineteenth. *Maccovius* endeavours to answer them, but in my humble Opinion, his Answer is not sufficient. His Answer, Sir, is, that there was in Man, in his innocent State, Justice as to the Nature of it, which we now call punishing, and yet he could not punish others in a State of Integrity; and there was that in Man which we call Mercy, as to the Nature of it, and yet he could not exercise Mercy, because there is no Place for Mercy, except in a

State of Misery <sup>f1</sup>—This Answer, Sir, Is by no Means satisfactory to me, because Man might have exercised both Justice Punishing, and Mercy, while in his innocent State, in Care of proper Subjects for the Exercise of this Justice, and this Mercy. But the Exercise of special Faith in Christ, necessarily supposes the Subject of that Act, to be himself a guilty and miserable Creature; and therefore, the Fall of Man must precede this Act, but a perfect Creature, may reasonably be supposed capable of exercising punitive Justice towards the Guilty, and of exercising Mercy towards the miserable, as the holy Angels doubtless do towards miserable and helpless Men.

*I shall now, Sir, consider, The Arguments this Gentleman advances to prove that evangelical Repentance and saving Faith, are the Duties of all who hear the Gospel. He begins with the Institution of Sacrifices.* It is readily granted, that they were of divine Appointment, vicarious, Types of Christ, and of that real Atonement he has made by his Death for Sin. They also directed to an Acknowledgment of Sin, and that Men deferred Death; and to Christ: as the Object of Trust and Hope for Remission and all spiritual Benefits; but these Things afford no Proof, that all who offered Sacrifices stood obliged to exercise that Repentance and

Faith whereof we speak; for if so, then none but true Penitents and Believers had a Right to offer Sacrifices, which cannot be thought.

Christ: as a suffering Saviour was typically represented by those Sacrifices, and it was a Duty incumbent on all who offered Sacrifice, to believe the fulfilment of the divine Promises, concerning the Appearance, Work and Sufferings of the Messiah; but I apprehend it can never be proved, that the Exercise of special Faith in him, was required of all, who offered Sacrifices; or, that the Offering of Sacrifice obliged any to the Exercise of this special Faith. It cannot be pleaded that this Faith was enjoyned, as a Qualification on those who offered Sacrifices; for then, none but Believers might lawfully do it, which we know is not true: and therefore, the Institution of Sacrifices, can only be considered, as a typical and external Representation of the Messiah, and by Consequence could be only a proper Foundation for common, and not special Faith.

*The Proof he brings from the general Exhortations to Repentance, delivered to the People of the Jews in the Writings of Moses and the Prophets*, is altogether impertinent in my Opinion. 'Tis to be observed, that the *Jews* were a People separated from all others, *they dwelt alone and were not reckoned among the Nations*, and God became their God providentially, to confer temporal Favours upon them, to protect them; he entered into a Covenant with them, as a Nation, and required on their Part, that they should worship him only, observe his Laws, exercise Justice shew Benevolence and Kindness one to another; on his Part, he promised them a peaceable Possession of the good Land, Plenty, Victory over their Enemies, and their Multiplication in that Land, and long Life, on Condition of their Observance of his Statutes and Judgments, which they on their Part promised; God threatened them with Evils of the forest Nature if they did not, *viz.* the Sword, Famine, noisome Beasts and Pestilence, and with Captivity; but at the same Time assured them, that if they humbled themselves under these Judgments, and turn'd to him, he would remove those Evils, and restore to them Peace, Plenty, and Security from their Enemies, and that he would not totally destroy them. (Leviticus 26. Deuteronomy 4. Chap. 28 and 29) Agreeable to the Plan of this Covenant, the Prophets treat with that People, remonstrate against their national Crimes, exhort to national Repentance, Humiliation and Reformation, denounce temporal Evils, promise temporal Blessings, in Case of Amendment, as may be abundantly seen in their Writings. (Isaiah 1:19,20. Ezekiel 18. Amos 2:3,4,5,6.) But it is not to be proved, that spiritual and eternal Blessings were promised in that Covenant, nor, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith were therein required, it will as soon be made evident, that when the Land of *Canaan*, and

Affluence and Plenty therein are promised, that Heaven is intended or included in those Promises, as that, when the People of the *Jews* are exhorted to Repentance and turning to the Lord, evangelical Repentance is designed and implied in those Exhortations. That Covenant contained not spiritual Blessings, neither did it oblige to any spiritual Acts, such as evangelical Repentance, and special Faith are. It will as soon be proved, that Earth is Heaven, as that the Repentance required and enjoyned by Vertue of that Covenant, was of a heavenly Kind. This Writer, Sir, sometimes makes a great Difficulty of admitting the Distinction of natural and evangelical Repentance, of historical and special Faith; but here he is obliged. to allow of it, tho' he pleads that natural Repentance and historical Faith, were not the whole of the Duty required and enjoyned by the Law of Sacrifices, on the Nation of the *Jews*; this he argues from God being represented as *their Redeemer in Christ*. When he is able to prove this fine Point, I shall freely grant his Work is done. This contains, if I mistake not, a tacit Acknowledgment, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith, are the Duties only of such Persons, to whom God reveals himself in his Word, as their Redeemer through Christ He seems to suppose, that God so revealed himself the Body of the Jewish Nation, than which nothing is more false in Fact; and therefore all his Reasoning on this Head is impertinent, groundless, and inconclusive. There is not any thing advanced from the Old Testament, which amounts to the Proof of the Point.

Let me now observe to you, what he brings from the New Testament.

He begins with the Preaching of *John the Baptist*, who exhorted to Repentance, *repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*.

**1.** Repentance was required of the *Jews*, as a Nation, for all the Blood of the Prophets which had been shed amongst: them, and for that Opposition they made to the true Interest and spiritual Kingdom of the promised Messiah; the Want of that Repentance proved their Destruction, which soon followed the Introduction of the New Testament State.

**2.** Evangelical Repentance was the Duty of particular Persons, which he also preached, and show'd the Necessity of, but it can't, I think, Sir, be proved, that he ever asserted it to be the Duty of unregenerate Persons, to exercise that Grace. This becomes the Duty of Men, when they have Warrant from the divine Word, to consider God as their Redeemer in Christ, which no unregenerate Men have any Warrant to do. It is not question'd, but he also preached Faith in the promised Messiah, but what Proof does this afford, that Faith is

the Duty of such Persons, as have not at present Warrant to consider God, as their Redeemer through Christ? None at all.

Christ in his Ministry also preached Repentance.

### 1. A general and national Repentance.

2. Evangelical, as did also his Apostles; but pray, Sir, do you think, that there is no preaching of Repentance evangelical, and special Faith in Christ, without allowing that Men unregenerate stand obliged to exercise that Repentance and Faith? To me it seems very evident there may. This Writer produces a Multitude of Texts to prove the Point he contends for, but in many of them Repentance and Faith are not so much as mentioned; it will be sufficient to refer you to those Scriptures in the Margin (Acts 4:10,11,12; Acts 5:42; Acts 13:46,47; Acts 18:5,6; Act 20:26, 27; Acts 28:24, 31.) In others, where Repentance and Faith are exhorted to, it evidently appears, that the Persons addressed were the happy Subjects of a Conviction of their Misery by Nature, and therefore not to be considered in a State of Unregeneracy; to these Places I will also refer you in the Margin (Acts 2:37; Acts 13:26). He farther observes, that Men will be condemned for the Want of Faith in Christ, and brings several Texts in confirmation of this Observation; which are also referred to in the Margin (John 3:18,19,36; 2 Thessalonians 1:7,8; Hebrews 10:28,29). But because he who believes not is condemned now by the Law, under which he is, as a Covenant of Works, and not under Grace; it follows not, that his Want of Faith is the Cause of that Condemnation. With Respect, Sir, to what the Author observes of *all Men* being commanded *to repent*, it intends a forsaking of Idolatry, and embracing the Worship of the true God alone (Acts 17:30,31). The Distinction of natural and evangelical Repentance, of common and special Faith, which he before allowed, he now denies, and demands Proof that *John* the Baptist uses the Distinction, when he preached Repentance; I think, Sir, I may demand of him to prove that this Distinction, cannot take Place in his Discourses, since it is evidently found in Scripture; and if he is not able to give Proof that his Scope and Design, will not admit of this Distinction, however positive he may be, of being in the Right, at least, it is *possible* he may be in the wrong. I beg leave to observe to you, Sir, that our Saviour manifestly speaks of Repentance, when evangelical Repentance is not intended. The Place I now refer to is Matthew 11:21, *they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Ashes*. Upon no Scheme can Repentance here mean evangelical; it cannot upon the *Calvinistical* Scheme be certain, this is so evident that nothing is required to evince it. Nor can it intend such Repentance upon the *Arminian* and *Baxterian* Schemes, for if God

foresaw that they would have repented, in Case such Works had been done among them, he would have wrought those Works in their View to bring them to Repentance; upon the Foresight of which, he decreed the Happiness of Men, according to these Schemes, and therefore this Writer, who is no *Calvinist*, but a *Baxterian*, I should think must grant that evangelical Repentance, is not there intended; for ‘tis strange to suppose God to decree the Happiness of Men, upon Condition of Repentance and Faith, and yet determine to withhold those Means from them, which he foresees would bring them to Repentance and Faith.

The Author, Sir, makes the Calvinist: object to him, that special Faith cannot be the Duty of all; *because it is said, that some believed not, because they were not of Christ's Sheep; the Meaning must be this: That as those who believed were of Christ's Sheep, so they believed because, they were so; i.e. they believed because they were chosen to Faith and Salvation. And if others believed not, because they were not of Christ's Sheep, they believed not, because they were not chosen to Faith. And then saving Faith could not be their Duty, but must belong to the Sheep of Christ alone.* I confess I do not see the Force of this Objection, for Me not being chosen to Faith, is no solid Objection, as I apprehend, to that being their Duty. The Author was in the right, not to start a Difficulty which he could not remove; it is no Point of Prudence, to frame an Objection to one’s Opinion, which will not admit of a full Answer. But, perhaps, Sir, this was done with a Design to introduce Arminianism, rather than confirm the Opinion of special Faith being the Duty of unregenerate Men: For, says he in Answer, *you cannot but know it has been very much doubted, whether these Words have any immediate Reference to the Decree of Election. When those that believed are called the Sheep of Christ, this may be as they were of a more teachable Disposition than the others.* So say the Socinians and Arminians, whom Dr. Doddridge, in his Family-Expositor has followed. This Gentleman insists much upon the obvious and literal Sense of Scripture, when it makes for his own Opinion; but here, Sir, you see, he can allow that the Disposition of Persons, is put for the Persons themselves, and such a Disposition as is not natural, but given to and created in them, when the Scope of the Place requires not this improper Sense but only his anti-evangelical Sentiments. Christ’s People are not called Sheep, because of a natural Disposition in them t Goodness, for that they have not, and if this Character is expressive of their natural Temper, it is a wandering one: *All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way.* ‘Tis evident, that the Words are expressive of this, that there Persons believed not, because they were not of the Number of such, who were made the Care and Charge of Christ, and

in Consequence of that, hear his Voice, follow him, to whom he gives eternal Life, do not perish, and whom none can pluck out of Christ's Hand, nor out of the Father's Hand. This is clear from the very Scope of the Place. *However*, says he, *your Conclusion from there Words, is directly contrary to the Intention of them. For, when the Jews demand an open and direct Declaration from Jesus, whether he was the Christ, v.23. be blames their Unbelief in there Words, v. 24. I told you, and ye believed not: The Works that I do in my Father's Name bear Witness of me. And pray let it be observed, that it is one and the same Object of Faith, viz. Christ Jesus in his Character of the promised Messiah, which is here spoken of; which one Sort are blamed for not believing in, and which the Sheep of Christ did believe in. And therefore the Duty must be one and the same to both.* I answer, the Jews Question is, whether Christ was the Messiah, he observes he had told them that he was, and that his Works testified it, and ye believed not, *i.e.* ye did not think it true that I am the Messiah, which they might have done without special Faith. Special Faith includes common, but common Faith includes not special. And then he asserts, that they believed not, because they were not of his Sheep, in which Words special Faith is intended, or more than common Faith, as appears by what follows; but in the preceding, Faith is put for common Faith, or a bare Persuasion of his being the Messiah, so that this is no Proof, that it was the Duty of these Jews to exercise special Faith. Not content with this Arminian Observation, he proceeds farther and says, *others that believed not, were left to their own Prejudices and Perverseness, for opposing and resisting the Light, and the Means of Conviction.* And this is what Enmity will eternally do, which the Heart of Man is, against God and all spiritual good.

***He very artfully pretends, that he differs not from the Calvinists, except in some lesser Circumstances, concerning the Nature of the divine Decrees in Election and Reprobation, the Condition of Man by the Fall, his standing under the Covenant of Works, the absolute Freedom of the divine Agency and Operations in saving Souls.*** This, Sir, is an Observation absolutely false in Fact, as his own Reasoning will fully convince you, who are not to be imposed on by any artful Pretences, to maintain the Doctrines of Grace, when the Salvation of Men is made to rest on the Determination of the human Will, not brought to this Determination by the Grace of God alone, but only excited and stirr'd up by divine Influence. This, Sir, you know to be the very Soul of the Arminian Cause, you are sensible, that the Arminians deny not the Aids and Influences of divine Grace, but allow of such Influences, and urge that the Will of Men is left to chuse Good o Evil, without the Infusion of spiritual Principles, to effectually determine them in the Choice they make. Some weaker

Christians may possibly be led into a Mistake, by this Author's Pretences of believing and maintaining the Doctrines of Grace, but Persons of your Penetration and Acquaintance with the *Arminian* Controversy, will easily discover the Absurdity of all these Pretences. Had not this Writer attempted to build up *Arminianism*, upon the Foundation of the Opinion of evangelical Repentance and special Faith, being the Duties of unregenerate Men, I had not given you and the World this Trouble, for tho' I apprehend that Opinion is not to be supported by Scripture, and the Analogy of Faith, it seems not to me to be of such Consequence, but that Persons differing in this Point, may fully agree about the Doctrines of the Grace of God, tho' those who are for the Affirmative may find it somewhat difficult to defend the Justice of God, in damning Men eternally, for not doing, what Man in no State, was furnished with a Power to do.

***He tries various Methods to prove the Point.***

I. By observing, that the Law, i.e. the moral Law, must command Repentance, or at least include it, in case of Sin, because Men cannot return to Duty without a Sense of and Sorrow for Sin. This seems self evident. But it will not prove the Truth of the Thing contended for. Heathens, who never heard a Word of Christ and Salvation by him, stand obliged to Repentance for Sin, and Reformation in Life. Farther he observes, that God in the Renewal and Republication of his Law, under the old as well as new Dispensation, has commanded Men to repent and believe. True, but then, in order to prove, that Men unregenerate stand obliged to exercise evangelical Repentance and special Faith, it must be made evident, that such Repentance and such Faith, are intended in those Precepts, which as I think is not yet done.

He cannot, Sir, rest in this Account of the Matter, not because (as I suspect) it fails of proving the Thing he pleads for; but because this State of the Case would prove an unsurmountable Difficulty, to what he has greatly at Heart to introduce, viz *Arminianism*, and would force upon us, under the Notion of pleading the Cause of Repentance and Faith, against all such *Antinomians* as you, and I, Sir, are accounted. And therefore he asserts, that the Law demanded perfect Obedience, nothing left. (very true so far). He adds And therefore, neither in express Terms, nor by any secret Implication could it command Repentance. To suppose this, would directly contradict the Perfection of the Law, and effectually enervate the Obligation and Design of it. This is strange indeed! What if a Creature offends against God, hath the Law no Power still to command him to practice his Duty? And is not natural Repentance necessarily included in a Return to Duty, when the Creature has revolted? If not, then, no Remorse or Sorrow for Sin, can justly be

expected of those who hear not the Gospel: Nor is Repentance in any Sense their Duty. But he seems to provide an Answer for this, in what he immediately subjoins, which is, *As for the Law of Reason and Equity, resulting from the Nature and Relation of Things between God and Man in his fallen State, this is no Law of Innocency or Covenant of Works; has no positive Seal or Sanction, unless you will make a new Law of it.* To which I answer, is this a Law? So he calls it, and is it not the same Law with the Law of Innocency, or Covenant of Works, but distinct from it, which he asserts it is? Then it is another and a new Law. Did not the Law of Innocency provide for what should or might be expected of Man in his fallen State, in a Way of Duty, upon the Supposition of no Provision being made for his Salvation? If not, Man upon his Sin became free from the Obligation of that Law, 'till a Discovery made of Salvation by the promised Seed; and the Heathen World who are absolute Strangers to Christ, are not now under the Command and Power of the Law, which will not be granted him, Sir, as I think. For, what he calls the Law of Reason and Equity, is that Law which the Apostle affirms to be *written in their Hearts*, and is the Law of Innocency, (in its Remains) or Covenant of Works, *Romans 2:15*, according to which they were sensible they became obnoxious to Death, *Romans 1:32*, for their dreadful Sins.

He thinks it a Contradiction to say, that *Repentance and Faith cannot be the Duties of Believers by the same moral Law, how, says he, shall the standing perpetual Obligation of the moral Law be made to agree with this?* Methinks, this makes the Obligation to arise from the Gospel and the Grace of it. For here it seems the Law, tho' the only Rule of Duty, has no Force without the Gospel; and the Duties of Faith and Repentance only take Place, and become Duties from Gospel Grace. These Things look a little perplexed, as if they would not hang together. To these Particulars I answer,

1. That natural Repentance is a Duty inferrible from the Law, without the Supposition of a Revelation of Gospel Grace.
2. It is certain, That that Law which obliges Men to adore God, as a Being of all possible and infinite Perfections, lays them under Obligation to assent to the Truth of what, at any Time, he shall please to reveal.
3. The Gospel is a Revelation of divine Truths not discovered to Man in his State of Innocence, and in that State therefore, it cannot be supposed he was oblig'd to assent to them.

**4.** Man stood obliged to exercise Repentance for his Sin by the Law, immediately and before a Revelation of a Saviour.

**5.** But before God had revealed to him a Saviour, it was not his Duty to believe in him. The Gospel proposes the Object of Faith, and the Law obliges to the Act of Faith, suited to the Nature of the Revelation of that Object.

**6.** Men enjoying an external Revelation *merely* of Christ, are bound to believe the Truth of his Appearance in the World, and the Truth of those Doctrines relating to him, as a suffering Redeemer.

**7.** Such who receive an internal Revelation of Christ, are bound to exercise special Faith, suitable to the Nature of this supernatural Revelation. Thus it appears, that these Things are far from being perplexed in themselves, they only seem so to this Author, they hang together very well. The Gospel presents the Object of Faith, and the Law obliges to the Act, upon the Presentation of the Object, and the Nature of that Presentation, to common Faith if it is only external, to special, if it be internal and supernatural.

**II.** He represents it as the Opinion of the *Calvinist*, that Sinners are shut up under the Law, and makes him explain himself as to that Point after this Manner. *I suppose the perpetual Obligation of the moral Law; not only for Obedience, but Sinners lie under the Penalty and Curse of it.* The *Calvinist* then, Sir, I should think can't justly be accounted an *Antinomian*. *They have only to do with the God of Nature, and him as an offended angry God. They are shut out from the Gospel of Salvation, 'till Gad by the sovereign Hand of his Grace brings them in. Have nothing to do with God, as the God of Mercy and Grace in Christ, — have nothing to do for themselves, nor to be done with them for Salvation. No Day of Grace, before God's Day of effectual Grace, — no Offers, nor Tenders of Mercy end Salvation, before Salvation is brought Home to them by the Spirit. And even then, Salvation is not properly OFFERED, but given, — and not received 'till after it is given.* To these Things I answer thus: Men in a State of Enmity against God, as all unregenerate Persons are, cannot justly be supposed, to have proper Ground and Warrant to look upon God, as reconciled to them in Christ. What he makes the *Calvinist* say of Sinners, being shut out from the Gospel, I cannot well understand, nor do I know of any who so say. If by it is intended, that they are not to hear the Gospel; it is as remote from the Judgment of the *Calvinist*, as it is from the Opinion of the *Arminians*, whole Cause, this Writer, is an Advocate for: But if by it is designed, that unregenerate Persons have no *open*

Claim to Gospel Benefits and Privileges, he will I think never be able to disprove it. Sinners have many Things to do, *viz.* to pray to God, hear his Word, read the Scripture, and meditate upon it; yet not with a View to become the Authors of their Salvation, surely. But who says nothing is to be done with them for Salvation. None as I know of; *Calvinists* whole Opinion this is supposed to be, think it their Duty to inform Sinners that they stand condemned by the Law, for their Sins, that Salvation from Wrath and Hell, is only in Christ, and that unless they believe in him, and are made conformable to him, they will perish for ever without Remedy, and is this doing nothing with a View to the Salvation of Sinners? It is not indeed telling them, that the Grace of God, is extended to all without Exception, that Christ died with an Intention to save every individual of Mankind, that God and Christ have done their Part, and that if they will not be wanting to themselves, but will exert their natural Powers, they shall have Aids and Assurances of divine Grace, sufficient, if duly improved, to enable them to secure their eternal Welfare. These *Arminian* Tenets, the Author, manifestly intends to make Way for and introduce, to the Dishonour of him Grace of God, the Subversion of Christ's Satisfaction by his Death, and the Overthrow of the Doctrine of the Efficacy, of the gracious Operations of the Spirit upon the Souls of Men. What he means by a Day of Grace, before God's Day of effectual Grace, he should, Sir, have told us, if he means a Season in which God willed that Sinners should with his Aids convert themselves, but they would not, 'tis downright *Arminianism*, and it may justly be enquired, whether when one Season or Day of Grace Is over, a Day of effectual Grace will succeed? This he seems to suggest, which I cannot understand to be either *Calvinism*, or *Arminianism*, it seems to me to suit no Scheme at all.

**III.** With Respect to Offers and Tenders of Mercy and Salvation to Sinners I observe: That Christ and his Salvation are to be proposed for Acceptance, to all who see their Need of him, that this includes an Offer in it, but is more than an Offer, and that he is graciously given to them, and 'tis their Duty to embrace and receive him. This Subject I have more largely treated of, in my Answer to the Author of *Ruin and Recovery*. No Absurdity attends the Supposition of Christ being given before received, and being given in order to be received.

This Author, Sir, apprehends, that Sinners *may be under the Law, and yet under the Dispensation of Mercy and Reconciliation in Christ Jesus too*. What he means by the Dispensation, *etc.* I cannot understand, and therefore am unable to answer him, if he had said that Sinners may be under the Law or Covenant of Works, may stand

condemned by the Law, and yet be under Grace, *i.e.* the Covenant of Grace, and be thereby acquitted of their Guilt, freed from Condemnation and Death, and appear to have a Right to eternal Life, I should have perfectly understood him to have advanced most manifest Contradictions; but as he uses ambiguous Words and Phrases, I am at a Loss to frame an Idea of his Design. If by a Dispensation of Mercy and Reconciliation, *etc.* he intends the Season in which Grace and Mercy and Reconciliation are published to Men, the Sense is plain and natural enough; but this makes nothing for the *Arminian* Principles he artfully endeavours to introduce among Christians.

IV. He, Sir, represents the *Calvinist* as starting a new Turn of Thought, to prove Repentance cannot be of the Law. 'Tis strange he should make Men say, what is contrary to their avowed Principles: *Calvinists* are persuaded, that all Duties belong to the Law, and here he represents it as their Opinion, That the Duties of Repentance and Faith belong not to the Law. But let us hear this new Turn of Thought. It is this; *all that the Law of Creation commanded, it commanded to the first Adam. End if there are Duties of this Tenure, they must have been the Duties of innocent Adam. But it has been proved already, that on this supposition the Perfection of the Law cannot be maintained. And if they were not the Duties of the first Adam in this Way, they cannot be the Duties of his fallen posterity, because the Law is the same to both.* I answer, the Law did not command all to *Adam* in his innocent State, which became his Duty in a fallen State, by Virtue of that very same Law: It was not his present Duty to shew Compassion to miserable objects, or to love his Enemies, for he had no Objects of Misery to pity, in his perfect State, or Enemies to love, and yet if I mistake not, Christ's Interpretation of the moral Law in his Sermon upon the Mount, proves that our Obligation to pity the distressed, and to love our Enemies arises from the moral Law. Hence it appears: That that becomes the Duty of Man in his lapsed State by the Law, which it could not command of him for Want of Objects suitable in his perfect State. And thus, tho' Repentance could not be required of innocent Man by the Law, because Sin had not taken Place in him, nor could he consider God as an Object offended, yet upon his sinning and looking on God as an Object displeased, Repentance became his immediate Duty by the Law, *i.e.* natural Repentance or Concern for his Sin, his Obligation to this Repentance, arises not from a Discovery of Salvation, it would have been his Duty, if he had been left without any Provision of Recovery by divine Grace. And is the Duty of all his Descendants, yea, I am persuaded it is the Duty of the Devil himself to repent, this I think must be allowed, if Repentance necessarily attends forsaking of Sin, which I imagine

none will deny. Again, if the Obligation to Sorrow and Concern for Sin, arises from a Provision of Salvation for offending Creatures, and the Discovery of that Provision, then, the Devil is under no Obligation to Remorse for his Offence, nor are such of Mankind, who know nothing of Salvation by Christ, under any Obligation to repent of their Vices, how contrary soever to the Light of Nature.

V. He makes the *Calvinist* argue very unphilosophically in what he subjoins, representing him as saying, *Men must have new Faculties in order to evangelical Repentance and special Faith*. But, Sir, I am persuaded that *Calvinsits* may be as good Philosophers as himself, if any thro' Weakness or Inadvertency have so expressed themselves, it is ungenerous and unkind to urge it as the Opinion of the Party. They know perhaps, full as well as he does, that new Faculties are not given or created in Believers, the Mind, the Will and Affections, they consider not as Qualities, but Powers of the Soul, and essential to it, and know that the Supposition of giving new Faculties necessarily implies the Introduction of a new Soul. This is so mean a thing in him, that he may be ashamed of the mention of it. *Calvinists* know that the reasoning Powers of Men, are the same before and after Conversion; before Conversion, the Mind is the Subject of natural Principles only, and therefore is incapable of supernatural Acts: At, or upon Conversion, it becomes the happy Subject of heavenly and supernatural Principles, and is able to put forth supernatural Acts, suitable to the heavenly Objects presented to View by the Gospel, and which *Adam* in his State of Innocence was a Stranger to.

VI. What the Author proceeds to observe, of the Law *opening and enlarging itself, into what we call the Law of Reason and Equity, immediately upon the Fall*, Is a mere Invention to serve a Turn; the Law of Reason and Equity, what is it but the moral Law, or Law of Innocence? So far as known to Men, it is no Law distinct, and different from it. Is this Law perfect or imperfect? If imperfect, it is I am sure no Law of God, for he cannot be the Author of any imperfect Law: We *Calvinists* will have nothing to do with it; let *Socinians, Arminians* and *Baxterians* take it to themselves, who are all disposed to make the Power of fallen Man, with common Helps, the Measure of his Duty; we are of another Mind. If it is a perfect Law, it is the moral Law, or Law given to Man in his innocent State, and is the irrepealable and eternal Rule of Righteousness, by which Men will be hereafter tried and judg'd.

VII. The poor *Calvinists* is farther represented, as supposing *Adam in his perfect State, incapable of discerning and understanding Objects above what the Law or Dispensation, under which he then was, presented to him*. This Person tells us in his Preface, he has

taken the Liberty to represent the Opinions of others, in his own Words; so that, Sir, you are to observe, if the Opinions of the *Calvinists* are not very properly expressed, the Impropriety of Expression, Is to be imputed to this Writer, not to them. But if he would not express their Sentiments, in their own Words, (Reasons for which I can guess at, but will not name them) he should have given their true Sense. I know none who have said, or do say, that Man in his innocent State, could not understand the Nature of Objects above what the Law discovers. For, as the Angels who are perfect Creatures, can discern and understand evangelical Truths, so could Man, I question not, if a Discovery had been made of them to him in his primitive State: And have yielded a firm Assent to their Truth, as revealed by God his Creator. But special Faith in those heavenly Mysteries, the Powers of Man in a State of Innocence, it is apprehended were not disposed to, and fitted for, by his Creation Principles, and therefore it is concluded, that special Faith becomes a Duty, only upon the Supposition of the Infusion of su-per-Creation-Principles, into the Souls of Men.

**VIII.** He repeats the Nonsense of the Necessity of new Faculties; for Shame why is this done? *Calvinists* insist upon the Necessity of new and supernatural Principles, but are far from urging the Necessity of new reasoning Powers, they are not for two Souls in Men; their Opinion is, that Believers are the Subjects of two Principles, Sin, and Grace; but they have no Notion of two Souls in one Man. As I before said, if any have so expressed themselves, it was thro Weakness or Inadvertency, and the Candour and Ingenuity of the Author, Sir, appear in this Representation of the *Calvinists* Opinion in this Point.

The Author, Sir, argues from *a Delay of Punishment, and a Communication of temporal Favours, and enjoying an external Revelation of the divine Will, to a Purpose of saving Men in general*. So his old Friends the *Arminians* have always argued, but very impertinently and inconclusively. Providential Dispensations towards Men are no Interpretation of God's Purposes about them, with Relation to their eternal State, whether he designs to punish them hereafter for their Sins, or to fare them from endless Misery, thro' his Son *Jesus Christ*.

*'Tis true natural Duties are not to be performed merely upon the Foot of natural Religion, as distinguished from revealed, by Men who enjoy Revelation, but as heightened, and improved, and enforc'd by that Revelation, and as required by Jesus Christ, who is constituted the Ruler and Judge of all Men.* And this is from the mere Sovereignty of God. To which he objects thus, *to suppose that God acts thus with Sinners, by mere Sovereignty out of Christ, and*

*at the same Time by the Hands of Christ, this is what I cannot possibly understand.* Strange! no, God will do that hereafter by Christ towards Men, which he will not do in Christ, *viz.* try, judge and condemn them to eternal Punishment; if he can understand this latter, I should think without any Difficulty, he may conceive of the former; for the former is in Order to the latter, and leads to it. Says he, *please to tell us directly why the Sentence upon transgressing Sinners, according to the broken Law, is not fully executed; but sinners in common are spared long?* The Apostle, if he will believe him, resolves this Question; it is because *God is willing to shew his Wrath, and make his Power known, endured with much long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction.* The Answer is direct and full, as he requires it to be; but I suspect his Approbation of it: Tho' the Justice and Equity of the *awful* Procedure, it is far beyond his Power to disprove. He makes the *Calvinist* give him this Answer: *It is for the Elect's Sake.* He enquires, but *how for the Elect's Sake? Are they the Purchasers and Procurers hereof? Or is it for their Sakes, thro' the Merits and Purchase of Christ? If the latter is not the meritorious Cause hereof, then the Elect are thus far properly Mediators for Sinners, and something is done for their Sakes, which is not done for Christ's Sake.*

Out of Reverence to our Lord, who has told us, that the Days of Distress brought upon the *Jewish Nation, should be shortened for the Elect's Sake*, one might have expected a more sober Reply from this Writer. Our Saviour did not intend, that the Elect were Mediators for that People: Neither do *Calvinists* mean any Thing like it, when they so express themselves. Our Lord suggested, That that People should not become extinct, because Elect Persons were to arise from among their Descendants; and we mean, that Mankind are not destroyed, because God's chosen ones of the human Race, must all be born or rise into Existence, and that for this Reason, Men are permitted to live, and to live under such Circumstances, as will admit of the Execution of this gracious Design concerning the Elect.

I am, Sir, surprized at what follows in the Author, which is this, he pretends that he agrees in the Doctrines of God's free Grace with those *Calvinists*, who think that evangelical Repentance and special Faith are the Duties of unregenerate Men, and apprehend that the Obligation to those Duties arises from the moral Law; whereas there is nothing more false. They suppose that God has chosen a certain Number of Men to everlasting Life; that for there Christ died in order to save them, and for no others, with that view, that Grace in order to Life and Happiness is given to the Elect alone. He supposes, that God conditionally decreed the Happiness of all, and that the Death of Christ is of unlimited Extent, that Grace is given to the

Non-elect in order to Happiness, and that they may obtain Life, through a proper Improvement of this common Grace. Light and Darkness therefore, are not more contrary, than his Sentiments and those of the *Calvinists*, in many Respects, notwithstanding this pretended Agreement.

For this Reason, Sir, I flatter myself, that those of the *Calvinists*, who are of the Opinion before expressed, will not long join Issue with him; but oppose as heartily, at least, his *Arminian* Principles, as some of them have opposed the Opinion, that Sinners are not bound to exercise evangelical Repentance and special Faith. May the Lord, of his infinite Mercy grant, that his People may discern, into what Tenets this Person and some others are about to lead them, before *Arminianism* takes Root, in Societies, where it has long had no Place; but been rejected, as a Scheme of Doctrines not calculated to promote the Honour of God, the Glory of a Redeemer, nor the Comfort of the Saints. When he calls the Opinion he opposes a *novel Scheme*, he speaks very improperly, for it is not of itself Scheme, it is indeed, in the Opinion of some, it is so in my Apprehension, a proper Method to more clearly answer the *Arminian* Cavils and Exceptions to the Doctrines of the Grace of God, and carries not that Harshness and Severity in it, which the other Opinion does, of God's damning Men, for not doing, what Man never had a Power in any State to do.

***The next thing he labours, is to prove that a Day or Season of Grace is afforded to Men in general.*** He produces various Scriptures in favour of it; some of which are to be understood of the Permission of Men living a considerable Time before the Infliction of heavy and grievous Judgments. Others are Calls to a reverential Regard to the Gospel, Interest and Kingdom of Christ. Some are Exhortations to the Church and People of God. Others are Calls to external Reformation, in order to escaping temporal Evils and civil Death. And some are Exhortations to an Attendance on the Worship and Word of God. Some are not addressed to Sinners, nor spoken of Men in general, but of some in particular. It will be sufficient to refer you to them in the Margin for your Perusal (Genesis 6:3; 2 Peter 2:5; Luke 19:41,41; Psalm 2:12; Isaiah 55:6; Ezekiel 18:31,32. Chap. 33:11; Matthew 20:6; Luke 13:24,25. Chap. 14:16,17,22,23; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7,13; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:21).

The *Calvinist* is represented as answering that, *the Time allowed the old World, was not for their Repentance unto Life, but only for the reforming from Gross Wickedness; and so to avert and keep off the threatened Destruction of the Deluge. And the Time granted to the Jews, was only to ward off by external Reformation, the fore Calamity which afterwards befell them in their Destruction by the*

Romans. To which he replies thus, *we are under no Necessity of denying this altogether; but may rarely grant, that what you plead was in Part the Design of Providence, but it lies upon you to prove, from evident Circumstances in the Accounts given of there Things, that what you say was the whole of the Design.* You, Sir, will I persuade myself, account this a new Way of Reasoning, to desire the Proof of a Negative, in order to oblige a Disputant to give up the Affirmative. I apprehend it always lies upon him who affirms, to prove what he asserts, from the Scope and Circumstances of the Place, which he urges in Favour of the Opinion he advances from it, and if he is not able to do this, he too hastily draws his Conclusion from it. If Texts of Scripture speak of temporal or civil Death, to be avoided by a national and external Reformation, it would be very improper to argue, from that, eternal Death is to be avoided the same Way; which is the Manner of this Author's Reasoning. This is applying Texts to Subjects, of which they do not speak, and therefore cannot be their Meaning and Sense.

Again, if the Scriptures speak of an external Call to the Duties of natural Repentance and historical Faith, to interpret them of evangelical Repentance and special Faith, is applying them to a Sense far beyond what they Design, and therefore it cannot be true, which is also what this Person does. In order to prove, that this cannot be the Sense of those Scriptures, he produces, one of these two things is necessary to be done.

**1.** Either to prove, that such a Sense is foreign to the Scripture and is no where expressed, and therefore cannot be the Meaning of the Places alledg'd.

**2.** Or, to prove from the Scope and Circumstances of those Passages, that this cannot be the true and full Sense of them. The Proof of the first, I suppose he will never attempt: And the Proof of the second, I am, Sir, of Opinion is beyond his Ability. But if he cannot do this, the Sense he contends for will never be solidly supported. Besides, Sir, the Opinion of a Day, or Season of Grace, appointed to Men in common, supposes that God loves them, that he willed their Happiness, and has provided for it; that Christ died for them to save them, and that the Holy Spirit works upon them with the same gracious Design; but thro' their Folly and Obstinacy, God's Love is turned into Hatred, his Purpose to save them, is changed into a Resolution to damn them, that Christ died in vain with Respect to them, that the Holy Spirit is disappointed of the End he proposed to himself, in his benign Influences upon them. There are not, Sir, you well know the Doctrines of the free Grace of God, which this Writer pretends to have an Approbation of. They are as

contrary to those Doctrines, as Light is to Darkness: you see that under a Pretence of maintaining the Opinion of evangelical Repentance and special Faith being the Duties of Sinners, he is for conducting us into rank Arminianism.

*He acquaints us, that the Calvinist inclines to the Belief of the Doctrine of absolute Reprobation as the Counter-Part of Election; but the least said of it in the Pulpit is best, for there is no knowing who are reprobate till they prove themselves so by their openly wicked and abominable Lives.* But why the least laid of it in the Pulpit is best? If it be a scriptural Doctrine it surely is, at least, a harmless one; nay it is a profitable one, for there is no useless unprofitable Doctrine contained in the Word of God. Some perhaps may think too, it would have been better, if it had not had a Place in the Bible. If Men abuse this Doctrine, through Unbelief or Lust, that is no Objection to the Truth, Importance or Usefulness of the Doctrine itself; and I am well assured, a proper Explanation of it will never be attended with any hurtful Consequences to Men religious or profane, but thro' their Unbelief or carnal Lust.

Farther, why should it be concluded, that Men of openly wicked and abominable Lives are the Objects of Reprobation? Since Christ came into the World to save the *Chief of Sinners*; Men's present Wickedness therefore, is no Proof at all, that they are appointed to Wrath: It is only final Impenitence which can be a Proof of that.

He supposes, that a Provision of Mercy and Grace is made for the Non-elect. Then surely God loved them, and if so, how comes it to pass that he ever hates them? If once he willed not to punish them, how is it he inflicts Punishment on them? He then knew, what Manner of Persons they would be; this seems therefore, to necessarily suppose a Change in God. Besides, either the Salvation of Men is wholly to be resolved into the Will of God, and his Influence upon them, or, it is in Part owing to the Will of Men, if it is wholly and solely the Effect of the divine Will; then it manifestly follows, that God did not will the Salvation of those who perish, and if he willed not their Salvation, he must be supposed to decree or purpose their Misery. If Salvation is in Part of the Will of Man, then it can't be said, *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy*; then Men are born of the *Will of the Flesh*, in Part, and not altogether of God, in Regeneration. Besides, this conditional Decree respects either all, or some of the Non-Elect; if all, then all must be supposed to hear the Gospel, for the Conditions of Faith and Repentance, at cannot be thought are expected of them who never hear of the Object of Faith. Again, either there Conditions of Salvation are possible, or they are not, without the Infusion of gracious Principles, into the Souls of Men; is

possible, then, *they who are in the Flesh may please God, and the carnal Mind may be subject to his Law*, which I don't take to be true. If they are impossible Conditions to Men unregenerate, then God decreed to save Men upon Conditions absolutely out of their Power, and yet determined not to give them that Grace, which is necessary to enable them to perform those Conditions: which betides the Absurdity of it, leaves them under an Impossibility of Salvation.

He observes, that many *strict Calvinists* have allowed, *that God's Hatred of Esau must be taken in a comparative Sense, and can mean no more than this, that Esau was not loved and regarded in the same extraordinary Way with Jacob*. I thought: Hatred was the contrary of Love, and could not properly be put for a less Degree of it. Besides, the Apostle professedly treats of God's Purpose to lave some and punish others, and produces *Jacob* and *Esau* as Instances of it; his Design, therefore, is to shew that the Salvation of *Jacob*, proceeded from divine Love, and that the Destruction of *Esau* was a righteous Effect of divine Hatred. If therefore, by Hatred the Apostle means a lesser Love, it was a Love of such a Nature in God, from which the Infliction of Punishment for Sin proceeds, and by Consequence, from that Love, a Decree to inflict Penalty might be formed; an Interest in such a Kind of Love, can afford but little Hope of Salvation to a guilty Creature. He adds, *the Apostle Jude doth not speak of any Decree of Reprobation, v. 4, but only that God has ordained Condemnation to be the Consequence of Sin, and the Portion of evil Doers*. But, Sir, you will please to observe, that the Apostle is speaking of Persons, who were, says he, fore-appointed, or forewritten, οἱ προγραμμηνοι, to this Condemnation; all the Difference between the Apostle *Jude* and this Writer is, *Jude* speaks of Men as the Objects of a divine Appointment or fore-writing to Condemnation; and this Author speaks of Punishment as the Consequence of Sin in general, without Relation to any particular Persons. This Difference, great as it is, is not unusually found between the Scriptures, and the Writings of the *Arminians*, whose Cause the Author defends (as I suppose,) in the best Manner he can.

**The Author endeavours to clear himself of the Charge of holding the Opinion of a New Law.** The Method he takes to do it, is this: *We maintain, says he, the Perfection and perpetual Obligation of the moral Law of God, and plead for no new Law in the Room of that, so as to annul it. We don't make Repentance and Faith a Covenant of Works, nor Salvation depend only on these as Man's Duties. But the Gospel we call a new Dispensation, built upon God's Act of Grace in Christ. And as the Fall occasioned a new Relation between God and Man, new Duties necessarily arise from hence. The moral Law is not only kept up in its Perfection, but it is put into the Hands*

*of Christ, as the appointed Lord and King in the Church; and it is also attemper'd to the State and Condition of Sinners and Gospel Grace. The Place which Repentance and Faith hold in the new Covenant, is all of Grace; and there Duties are to be performed by the Help and Strength of God's Grace, and must be accepted thro' Christ. Where then is the Charge of a new Law? Upon which I thus remark: It seems to be allowed, that a new Law is introduced, yet not so as to annul the old Law; that, notwithstanding retains its Power and Force, only Men are also under another Law, which if they keep, they shall not suffer that Punishment the old Law threatens; but in Case they keep not this new Law, they are delivered over to the Curse of the old Law. Again, if Repentance and Faith are proper Conditions of Salvation, they are made a Covenant of Works; all the Difference is, the old Law required perfect Works as Conditions of Happiness, here imperfect Works serve the Purpose. Farther, it is plainly allowed, that Salvation depends on Faith and Repentance, (tho' not only) as Man's Duties: And therefore Men are in Part causes of their Salvation. I add, I suppose the Act of God's Grace mentioned, is dispensing with the rigorous Demand of Perfection in the moral Law, as a Condition of Life, upon which the Gospel Dispensation is laid to be built, which lowers the Condition to imperfect Obedience. Moreover, if Repentance is one of those Duties, which necessarily arise from the new Relation, occasioned by the Fall, between God and Man, then it would have been the Duty of Men, in Case no Provision had been made for their Recovery, which is what the Author has more than once seemed to disallow. I cannot understand what new Relation between God and Man takes Place upon the Fall. Before the Fall, God was Creator, a Lawgiver and Judge to Man: So he was upon the Fall; Man before it, was his Creature, the Subject of his Rule and Government, and so he is after it; but now a Creature chargeable with Guilt, and obnoxious to Death, these are new Circumstances to the unhappy Creature Man; but in no Sense, as I can at present apprehend, may they be denominated a new Relation to God. I subjoin, it is granted, that the moral Law is put into the Hands of Christ, and he uses that Law, either as a Saviour, or as a Judge merely; in the former Sense, he acquits his People upon the Foundation of his Obedience and Sufferings, and flees them from it as a Covenant of Works: In the latter Sense, he retains Men under the Curie and Condemnation of it now, and will hereafter try, judge and condemn them to endless Misery, according to that Law. I deny, that the old Law is attempered to the State, and Condition of Sinners and Gospel Grace, it commands the same Holiness it ever did, and threatens the same Punishment in Case of Sin, or Defect in Obedience; otherwise its Perfection and perpetual Obligation cease, which this Writer a few*

Lines above professes to maintain perfectly inconsistent with what is here said, unless I mistake. To say that Repentance and Faith are Conditions of Life, as an Effect of divine Grace, will not acquit the Opinion, of being contrary to the Doctrine of the Apostle, who constantly denies, that Salvation is of a Law, or of Works. And tho' these Duties are said to be performed by the Help and Strength of God's Grace, and that they are accepted thro Christ; yet it is easy to see, that the promised Benefit of Life, becomes due upon the Foot of Right, on the Performance of those Duties, and therefore, the Reward is not of *Grace*, but of *Debt*; and that these Duties are to be considered, as the Matter of our Justification before God for Christ's Sake. To the Author's Enquiry therefore, I must take leave to say, Sir, the new Law is here, and that he will never be able to clear himself of so heavy but just a Charge. All the Art he has used, in the Choice of *ambiguous* Phrases, could not cover his Design, it was a vain Thing in him to expect it; for if Men deliver Principles, which necessarily resolve themselves into the Opinion of a new Law, it can't reasonably be thought, That that Opinion should long remain out of View. But what follows is exceeding strange, he tells the *Calvinist* it would not be difficult to *make Reprisals*. *For you must grant*, says he, *that the Law is no longer in Force as a Covenant of Works, for the Justification of Sinners: This infers so far an Alteration from the original Law; and therefore one might say you make a new Law.* The Answer is, that it is not merely as a Law, it requires Obedience of Men as a Condition of Life, but as it is a Covenant. Their Freedom from it, as requiring Obedience to such an End, infers no Change in it as a Law, for it is not essential to it as a Law, to command Obedience to such an End; but it is essential to it as a Law to require Obedience, and if it now demands of Men imperfect Obedience, it is altered in what is essential to It as a Law, and therefore, is not the same Law it was. Farther, it is still in force, as a Covenant requiring perfect Righteousness in Order to Acceptance with God: Believers have such a perfect Righteousness in Christ, and therefore, they stand perfectly justified in the Sight of God, according to this Law, fulfilled for them, by Christ their great Surety and Saviour.

*I proceed, Sir, to give you an Account of the Manner of his treating on the Work of the Spirit.* And, he observes, that it is God's usual and ordinary Way to work on such by whom preparatory Works to Conversion are performed, as assisted by his preventing Grace. Various Scriptures he produces to prove, that there is such a Thing as a preparatory Work, to which I shall refer you in the Margin (1 Kings 14:13; Matthew 3:7; Matthew 10:11, Verse 13; Matthew 13:20,21; Mark 10:17, Mark 12:34; Luke 5:31, Luke 13:24; Acts 2:5,37, Act 8:27, Acts 10:1, Acts 16:30, Acts 17:4, Acts

26:28). Some of those Places intend the Work of Grace itself, and others have no Reference at all to it. As to the Opinion of a preparatory Work, I cannot but be of the Mind of Witsius, that there is no such Thing, he assigns these Reasons for it.

**1.** *Our Nature became as an evil Tree upon eating of the forbidden Fruit, can bear no Fruits really good and acceptable with God, and can act nothing by which it may prepare itself for the Grace of Regeneration: Unless any one should be thought to prepare himself by Sins for Grace.*

**2.** *Those who seem best disposed to Regeneration, it is found are most distant from it. Which the Example of the young Man very clearly demonstrates; who seemed full of good Intention, and burning with a Desire of Heaven, and of unblameable Life before Men, insomuch, that Jesus himself, when he beheld him loved him, yet notwithstanding all these Dispositions, he departed from the Lord sorrowful*

**3.** *On the contrary, those in whom there hath been nothing, not a Shadow of Preparation, as Publicans and Harlots, have gone before the civilly just, and externally religious, into the Kingdom of God; for these believed not John preaching the Way of Righteousness; but Publicans and Harlots really believed.*

**4.** *God testifies, in the first Influence of his Grace, he is found of them; that fought him not, and asked not after him (Jeremiah 65:1) Excellently Fulgentius, says he, whom he quotes, we receive not Grace because we desire; but while we desire not Grace is given. Milton well expresses the important thought. Grace, —*

*Comes unprepared, unimplor'd, unsought,  
Happy for Man so coming; he her Aid  
Can never seek, once dead in Sins and loft.  
Paradise Lost, Book III. ver. 231, 232, 233.*

For these Reasons, I say, with Witsius, who puts the Question, *are there no preparatory Dispositions to Regeneration?* I answer confidently *none*, and subscribe with him to Fulgentius, *As in the natural Birth, the Formation of the divine Work precedes the whole Will of the Man born: So it is in the spiritual Birth, by which we begin to lay aside the old Man.* Of the same Judgment was the great Charnock, and the late Dr. Ridgley.

The Author, Sir, represents the Calvinist as objecting to him, that he *makes upon this Supposition the Salvation of Sinners possible indeed, but barely so.* Which he endeavours to answer, by referring

to Angels and to Man who fell; his arguing here, I shall take no farther Notice of, than just to observe, the Cafes are far from being parallel, and therefore, his Reasoning has little Force in it. I must take Liberty to affirm, that the Salvation of Men, upon this Principle, is absolutely impossible, unless it can be proved, that *without Faith it is possible to please God*, and that *those who are in the Flesh may please their Maker.*

He makes the *Calvinist* object to his Opinion, that supposing the Death of Christ to be of universal Extent, implies *he died in vain*. To which he answers thus: *As often as I meet with this Objection, I cannot find any just Reason or Foundation to support it. There certainly is a twofold Design and Intention in the Redemption wrought out for Sinners. One is, that the Patience and Forbearance, the rich Goodness, Mercy and Grace of God, might be manifested and glorified in his Dealing with Sinners. And the ether is, that his righteous Government, his Power, his Holiness and Justice might be also glorified.* Now if thro' the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus, *the Patience and Forbearance of God, and the Riches of his Mercy and Grace are displayed and glorified, in his present Dealings with Sinners, which is the Case on our Side of the Question.* And if *his Holiness, Justice and Power are glorified to the full, in the Condemnation and Destruction of the impenitent and ungodly hereafter; this is not in vain, but exactly of a Piece with God's great and complicated Designs in Providence and Redemption.* Where Grace is rejected and despised, punishing Justice will be glorified. To which I reply, Sir, thus.

1. This seems to suppose, it was a Thing indifferent to God, whether his Mercy is glorified in the Salvation of Sinners, or whether his Justice is glorified in their Destruction, upon the Foundation of the Redemption of Christ; that his End is as fully answered in the Gift of his Son for Sinners in their Damnation, as it is in their Salvation; whereas it was his Intention that his Grace and Mercy might be glorified in their Salvation, and therefore, if they are not saved he is disappointed of his End in this extraordinary Transaction, and his Son suffered Death in vain, or the End intended, in his Death is unaccomplished. That this was the End designed is evident; *for God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* The Reader may see this more largely insisted on, in the Answer to the Author of *Ruin and Recovery*.

2. The Justice and Holiness of God are fully vindicated, and gloriously displayed, in the Remission of Sin, and in the eternal Salvation of Sinners, upon the Foundation of Christ's Death,

*Romans 3:25, 26*; and therefore, the Infliction of Penalty on those for whom Christ died, cannot be to the Glory of his Justice.

3. It would be contrary to Justice; for Christ having made Satisfaction for the Sins of those, for whom he suffered, it cannot consist with Justice to punish them for their Offences.

How are the Riches of divine Grace now glorified in God's Dealings with the Heathen, whom he suffers to live in *gross Darkness* and *in the Shadow of Death*? How can his Justice be hereafter glorified in punishing of them for Impenitence, who never had an Opportunity of hearing of Christ, and by Consequence, could not believe in him nor reject him.

The Author, Sir, again advances his Opinion of preparatory Works to Regeneration, but offers nothing worth Consideration to support it. I would just observe to you, Sir, that he objects, if the Soul is intirely passive *in all the Steps of the saving Change, how can you assert any thing about the Manner of it.* And represents the *Calvinists* as saying, *this is a Point which is divinely revealed to the believing Son.* Answer, as the Implantation of spiritual Principles in the Mind is Regeneration, the Soul is passive in it, and it is instantaneous or wrought at once, it is not gradual and progressive, and therefore, it is improper to speak of *Steps* in this Change. Again, I can't, Sir, but complain here of great Unkindness done to the *Calvinist*, to represent him as an Enthusiast, there is no Candour in this; *Calvinists* believe in this Matter, upon the Light and Evidence of God's Word, and not upon an imaginary Revelation, which he makes the *Calvinist* to express. He seems to flatter himself with having fully proved, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith are the Duties of Sinners, and that he has brought over, at least very nearly so, one of the Disputants in the Dialogue. How much soever he may be satisfied with his Performance, I can't think it will gain the Approbation of many of those, who agree with him in there Points.

A great Number of ill Consequences are drawn from that Opinion, in Answer to which, it is sufficient to observe, that Sinners ought to pray, to read the Word of God, to hear it preached and consider of the dreadful Effects of Sin. That Ministers ought to let before them the Danger of their State by Nature, and the Necessity of an Interest in Christ, and the Necessity of Faith in him.

That Sinners, sin against God, as the God of all Grace, when they oppose the Doctrines of his Grace, — against Christ as a Saviour, when they oppose their own Works to his Merits and Righteousness, — against the Holy-Ghost, as the Author of all gracious and sanctifying Influences, when they oppose the Necessity of his

Influences, — against the Gospel of Salvation, when they oppose the important Doctrines of it, as this Writer does. Sinners are condemn'd for abusing the Gospel. Parents and Heads of Families ought to warn and exhort their Children and Servants, — to call them to their Bibles, to send them to their Knees before God, or put them upon Prayer, to offer up a Desire, a Cry, to Heaven for Mercy and Salvation for them, — and with Importance and holy Wrestling. — After he has said, *none of these Things can be practised, consistent with this Principle*, and made a Supposition of *a Visit by the pious Soul of a departed Minister*, and his observing, *how Things are going with us, what a dismal Report he must carry back to the World above.* (One might make the same Supposition upon his Principles) I am afraid, says he, *of every Offence against the royal Law of Charity; I can easily admit, that great Mistakes and real Godliness may inhabit the same Breast: — I would always love and honour every good Christian, tho' not exactly of my Size, and in my Way. And yet I am at a loss to account for it, how Tenets so formidable in their Aspect, can sit easy upon serious and good Minds. But without farther Aggravation, as there Objections are just, and attended with a Train of Consequences no Way favourable to practical Religion,* (all there dismal Consequences are entirely false, and far from being justly drawn) *I leave them to your own Contemplation, and Repentance, and Faith, to the Word and Blessing of God.* Magna est Veritas, & prevalebit.

You, Sir, will observe his Candour and Charity, which I am sure will be highly agreeable to you, for that Kindness and Charity to those who differ from you, which inspire your Breast, must certainly gain your Approbation, when exercised by others. Whether the Consequences he draws are just, as I think the contrary, I desire you to inform me, whether you concur with me in that Opinion, and pray, let me know, wherein you may think me mistaken: I the more desire this Favour of you, because I suppose, I am a Person too contemptible, to be favoured with a Correction of my Mistakes, by the Author of the Performance.

The Qualifications he requires in one, who should undertake to animadvert on his Work, are most desirable indeed; may the Lord of his infinite Mercy make me a real and fervent Lover of *Truth, Peace and Godliness*. Whether I have acted the Part of *an angry Scribe*, I submit to your Judgment, and conclude this Address, with hearty Desires, that Truth may prevail, with whomsoever it is found.

I am, Sir,  
Your most obliged, and humble Servant  
JOHN BRINE.

# SERMON 10

## 1 TIMOTHY 1:15

“This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners; of whom I am Chief.”

### THE CHIEF OF SINNERS, SAVED THRO' JESUS CHRIST

#### A SERMON, OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF MRS. ANNE WILDMAN, WHO DIED JULY 12, 1747. PREACHED JULY 19.

THE Apostle, in some preceding verses expresses the grateful Sense he had of being called to the ministerial Work: *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry.* Next to his being a Subject of divine Grace, he esteemed it his Honour to be employed in the Work of Preaching the Gospel. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given; that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* (Ephesians 3:8) The Consideration of his Behaviour before Conversion, caused him to admire greatly at both. *Who was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained Mercy, for I did it ignorantly and in Unbelief and the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus.* He is not content to say of that Grace by which he was called, that it was abundant; but he adds to it the Epithet exceeding. Grace exceedingly abounded towards him, in making him a Minister and a Saint, who had been so great an Offender.

**In treating on the Words, I propose to shew,**

**I.** That All Men are Sinners.

**II.** That the Apostle thought himself to be the *Chief*, or greatest of Sinners.

**III.** That Sinners are lost, miserable, and helpless and unworthy.

**IV.** That Christ Jesus came into the World, to save Sinners, the *chief*, or greatest of them.

**V.** That an Assurance of Salvation thro' Christ, is very consistent with an Apprehension of our being the *chief* of Sinners.

**VI.** That the Report of Christ's coming into the World to save the *chief of Sinners* is true, and worthy of the most grateful Reception.

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**I. All Men are Sinners.** *By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)* Adam was our Head and Representative, and, therefore, his Act of Disobedience is reckoned to us. By one Man's Disobedience *many were made Sinners. (Ver.39)* In Consequence of our sinning in him, and falling with him, in his first Transgression; we derive a corrupt Nature from him. We are shapen in Iniquity and Conceived in sin. (Psalm 51:5) *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.* We are naturally *Flesh*, the contrary of that which is produced by the Holy Spirit: And, therefore, we are the Subjects of *putrid and carnal* Lusts: which the Apostle distinguishes into Lusts of the Flesh and of the Mind. *Among whom also we all had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of our Flesh fulfilling Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind. (Ephesians 2:3)*

By the Lusts of the Flesh, he designs those corrupt Inclinations, which are agreeable to our animal Nature, or inferior Part; and by the Lusts or Desires of the Mind, he intends, those unlawful Inclinations, Whereof our superior and intellectual Part is the subject. So that our whole Nature is corrupt and vicious, even that Part of us, which distinguishes us from the Brute-Creation, and which we glory in. The truth is, we are the Subjects, not only of *brutal*, but also of *diabolical* Lusts; and have a larger Capacity of sinning than the apostate Spirits have. Besides all those vicious Lusts which are agreeable to our inferior Part, and which immaterial Beings cannot be the Subjects of, nor act; we are the Subjects of those abominable Lusts, which are the Depravation of impure Spirits. Such as Pride, Envy, Malice, Hatred and Revenge; and, therefore, Men are not only capable of sinning in those Ways the Devil is, but in a greater Variety also.

As our Nature is thus corrupt, our Conduct is criminal. We have a Disposition to what is evil, and Sin is the governing Principle in us. Duties we omit, or practise them in art improper Manner, neither from a right Principle, nor to a right End, nor under the Influence of spiritual Motives and Considerations; and, consequently, tho' they are materially good, they have the Nature of Sin in them. *Our carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and it is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be.* Not so much as a spiritual and holy Desire can arise in our unsanctified Hearts; hence it necessarily follows, that those who are in the Flesh cannot please God. Until a divine Principle is

wrought in our Souls, we cannot perform any Service in an acceptable Manner to our Maker: For *without Faith it is impossible to please God.* (Hebrews 11:6) So long, therefore, as Men are in a State of Unregeneracy, their Actions are either materially or circumstantially sinful. Those which the Law forbids, are materially evil, and those which it commands, are circumstantially so, or they have the Nature of Sin in them, and, consequently, our Guilt must be very great: But, some are more criminal than others. I confess, that I have no good Opinion of distinguishing upon Sins, or of calling some great and some little Sins. for no Sin is little; thus to distinguish upon sins; has no good Influence on our Minds; under various Circumstances, before and upon the Commission of Evil. Yet some it must be allowed may justly be accounted greater Sinners than others; *viz.* who continue longer in a State of Rebellion, and indulge to the Gratification of a greater Variety of evil Lusts, and abide in a sinful Course against Knowledge, and sharp Remonstrances from the natural Conscience, improved in its Light by the Word of God. Such are great Offenders.

## **II. *The Apostle thought himself to be the Chief, or greatest of Sinners,* 'Of whom I am chief'**

- 1.** He was a virtuous Person before his Conversion to Christianity. A Pharisee of the Pharisees, a Student in the Law, and strictly attended to the Duties it required, so far as he understood it, and *touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, he was blameless, living in all good Conscience before God.* He did not allow himself in the Omission of known Duties, nor in the Commission of known Sins. And yet,
- 2.** He was guilty of very great Evils. This he confesses in these Words, *who was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious.* Full of Rage and Fury against Christ, and all who adhered to his Interest. He was *exceedingly mad against the Saints, and punished them in every Synagogue, compelling them to blaspheme.* Not satisfied with blaspheming himself, he forced them to do the same. As he injured them in their Persons and Liberty and Property, he also compelled them to act a Part contrary to their Persuasion and Conscience; at least, he attempted it, and they could not decline it, without increasing the violent Flame of his cruel Rage and Fury against them. But,
- 3.** In all this he acted not against Knowledge, or a Conviction of Mind and Conscience. These his Sins, were Sins of Ignorance. For what he did in Opposition to the Interest of Christ, he did *it ignorantly and in Unbelief. he verily thought with himself that he*

*ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.* (Acts 26:9) And, therefore, he was sincere in perfecting the Church. This plainly shews us, that Sincerity, if it is not exercised about Truth and Duty, is of no Advantage to the Souls of Men. A Zeal of God, without Knowledge, will never profit any; and it is very likely to grow into a *furious Rage*, against the Interest of divine Truth, as it did in our Apostle and the carnal Jews.

4. He now considered himself the *Chief* of Sinners. *Grotius*, that great *Perverter* of the Word of God, in his *Annotations*, understands the Phrase hyperbolically. He conceits, that the Apostle uses an Hyperbole, or that his Language was much stronger than the Nature of the Thing he expresses would bear.

But this was his *Figment* only. Our Apostle retains a Sense of what he was, before his Conversion, and the Consideration of it greatly humbled his Soul. Thus he practiced what he exhorted others to do, *viz.* to *remember* what they were in their Nature, State, and Conduct before divine Calling. So he exhorts the *Ephesians* to remember, that they were *Gentiles, in the Flesh.* (Ephesians 2:11) We Ought never to forget, What was our deplorable Condition by Nature,, and what was our Deportment, while Sin had the Dominion over us. The Apostle doth not say, I have been the *chief*; but I am the *chief* of Sinners: Every Saint in this World is a Sinner. It cannot be said of every Sinner, that he is a Saint; but it is true of every Saint in this *militant State*, that he is a Sinner; If not, he hath no Combat in him between *Flesh* and *Spirit*. In all Believers here, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh. There is not a just Man upon Earth that doeth Good, and sinneth not.* I am not insensible, that some have pretended, and that some do pretend to great Degrees in Holiness; and a Freedom from the Power of Sin; that if they are not wholly clear of Sin, they are very near it. But I am persuaded, that none will think themselves more holy, than *Abraham, David, and Peter*, and other good Men, of whom we read in, the Scripture, except such, who have no Holiness at all, and know not what it is, nor wherein it consists. A fuller Evidence of being under the Dominion of Sin, cannot be given, than an Imagination of a Freedom from the Being and Working of it in the Heart is. *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.* Paul was very eminent in Holiness, and by the Grace of God, he was enabled to conduct himself in such a Manner, as that he could say, *I know nothing by myself, i.e.* I am not sensible, that in any Instance, I have acted unsuitably to my Character, as a Minister, or a Christian: And yet he thought himself the *chief* of Sinners. He found himself to be the Subject of Sin, as well as of

Holiness, of Flesh, as well as of Spirit. He experienced to his Sorrow, that Sin was always present with him; that it attended him in the *Closet*, and in the *Pulpit*, and that, therefore, he could not *pray* without finning, nor *preach* without finning, nor discharge any Christian Duty without a sinful Defilement attending it. Persons *most eminent* in Holiness, have always had the *deepest* Sense of their Sinfulness. They look not upon themselves, nor on Sin, in the same Light, as others do. And, therefore, they think and know that to be Sin in itself, and in themselves, which others do not esteem to be so, nor accuse themselves of sinning on Account of. ‘Tis not because they are *more* sinful, or *less* holy, than Others; but because they are more acquainted with themselves, and with what Sin is, that they esteem themselves the *chief* of Sinners. The Apostle’s Sense of his Imperfection and Sins, caused him to sigh and groan, and consider himself as wretched. *Oh! wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*? It is an excellent Observation of one, *viz.* *that our Sense of Sin, is not according to what it is in itself, but according to what Impression God is pleased to make of it upon us.* Those who are most favoured with heavenly Influences, as they above others aim at Spirituality in Obedience, they best discern their Carnality, and, therefore, think themselves less holy, and *more* vile than others. Besides, the peculiar Aggravations, which they discover in their Sins, greatly increase their Guilt, in itself, and in their View, and for that Reason, they think themselves the *chief* of Sinners.

### **III. Sinners are lost, miserable, helpless and unworthy.**

**1.** They are condemned by the Law. Every Breach of the holy Law of God subjects us to a Curse. *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all Things, which are written in the Book of the law to do them* (Galatians 3:10). Which is not the Curse of a Creature, but of God himself. Every vain Imagination, every irregular and inordinate Desire, all disorderly Motions of our corrupt Affections, expose us to the Condemnation of the Law, which requires perfect Purity of Heart. And, therefore, since our Hearts are a Fountain of Impurity, from which continually spring defiled and defiling Streams, how many must those penal Threatnings be, that the Law breathes out against us. *Multiplied* Transgressions, bring us under *multiplied* Curses.

**2.** We are obnoxious to the Vengeance of God: Whose Wrath is as his Power, *i.e.* infinite. As we are not able to say what infinite Power is, so we cannot declare what infinite Wrath is: Both have no Measure or Limits. Our Obnoxiousness to the vindictive Displeasure of God, is a Misery not to be expressed. It far exceeds the Reach of Language and Thought too. This is our sad State by

Nature. *What Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them, that are under the Law; that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God* (Romans 3:10). We deserve to be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. Which includes the Loss of the Enjoyment of the highest Good, and suffering the extremest Torture and Pain, our Maker can be supported under, and that for ever.

3. We are absolutely helpless, and unworthy of Succour, in these our sad Circumstances. We cannot atone for a single Offence, much less are we capable or satisfying a violated Law and offended Justice, for our numerous Transgressions. The Weight of one Sin would sink us *deeply* into the infernal Pit; much more, therefore, must our *vast and accumulated* Guilt, press us down into *unfathomable* Depths of Misery. We are without Strength, and unable to do any thing towards our Recovery from Ruin. *The Redemption of our Soul is precious, and ceases for ever* (Psalm 49:8), with respect to what we are able to do towards it. We are irrecoverably lost as to ourselves. *We are wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked* (Revelation 3:17). And we are not more miserable, and unable to help ourselves, than we are undeserving of Succour from him, who alone can deliver us from this Ruin. For our Nature is corrupt, and vile, and our Conduct is a continued Provocation to the most high, and yet blessed be his Name, he has in infinite Goodness and Wisdom, effectually provided for our Recovery, and Happiness, in the Fruition of himself. This leads me to discourse of the next Thing proposed to be considered, that

#### **IV. Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, the chief of them**

1. He was before he came into this World. He existed in another and higher Nature, than that, in which he dwelt with Men, before his Entrance into the World. Hence he tells the Jews, *that Abraham rejoiced to see his Day; he saw it, and was glad*: they answer, *thou art not yet fifty Years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* Our Lord replies, *Before Abraham was, I AM* (John 8:56,57). They were much displeased at this Reply, for they well understood him to assert *his Existence* in another Nature than what they conversed with, or would own him in, *viz.* a Nature truly divine. The Name I AM, they were sensible, belonged to God alone, who revealed himself to Moses, under that Name, when he was about to deliver their Fathers out of *Egyptian Bondage*: *I AM hath lent me you* (Exodus 2:24). He always was in the *Form of God*, and, therefore, thought it no

*Robbery to be equal with God* (Philippians 2:4). *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made, that was made* (John 1:1,2,3). He, himself, must therefore, be uncreated, and, consequently, he existed in that increased Nature, before he was made of a Woman, in another Nature infinitely inferior to that.

**2.** His coming into the World, includes his Assumption of our Nature into Union with himself, his Subjection to the Law, his Obedience, his low Estate, and Sufferings, and Death for us.

(1.) He assumed our Nature into Union with himself. *The Word that was in the Beginning with God, and was God, was made Flesh, and dwelt among us* (ver.14): This was not by a Conversion of the divine Nature into the human, for that was absolutely impossible: That which is infinite, can never become finite and limited, or other than it is. Nor was it by a Confusion or blending of these infinitely distant Natures together. They continue distinct, and neither Nature possesses those Properties, which are peculiar to the other. The divine Nature does not become finite and limited, nor the human become infinite and unlimited, by this Union: Some who lie in wait to deceive, or at least endeavour to Conceal their Disbelief of the Deity of our gracious Redeemer, say, that he exercises the divine Perfections for the Good of the Church, and that this is the Meaning of those Words, *I and my Father are one* (John 10:30). But can our Lord exercise Perfections which he don't posses? Or can his human Nature become the Subject of infinite Perfections? Some who seem to suppose this, charge us with holding absurd Notions; And cannot they discover the Absurdity of there Imaginations? that Christ, as Man, may exercise Perfections, he neither does, nor can possess; Or, that a finite Nature can become the Subject of infinite Perfections: I say, have they not Sense enough to know, that neither can possibly be? If they have not, they are very unfit Persons to determine what is, or what is not absurd. I question not, but they are capable enough of judging in so plain a Case; but they say, that Christ is so one with the Father, as to exercise his Perfections for, the Good of his People, that they may conceal from the View, of some, their Denial of his proper Deity. I can never be persuaded, that this *Art* will meet with Approbation in an *awful* Time, that is hastening, however Men may please themselves in this Disguise. This Assumption of our Nature by the Word, is its personal Union therewith. And this is one principal Branch of the Mystery of Godliness. *Without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness, God was manifest the Flesh.* And this is the Foundation of the Merit which attended the Obedience

and Sufferings of Christ. For my Part, I shall never contend about the *Dignity* and Use of his Obedience to the Law, nor concerning, the *End and Efficacy* of his Sufferings and Death; if his proper Deity is not granted, and the Union of his human Nature with his divine, is not allowed; because the Obedience and Death of a *mere* Man, can never be of *saving use* to me, or any other poor Sinner in the World.

(2.) Christ became subject to the Law; And the Law is to be considered as a Law, *merely, or* as it is a Covenant. In the latter Sense, it requires Obedience in Order to Life; and threatens Death in Case of Disobedience. *Do this and live, sin and die,* are the Terms of it. As our Saviour was not a natural Descendant of *Adam*, and not included in him, nor represented by him, the Covenant of Works made with *Adam*, had no Concern with Christ, nor was he included in it, by Virtue of its original Constitution. And as he had a Right to Life and Glory in his human Nature, in Consequence of his Union with the Son of God, he could not become subject to the Law, as a Covenant; but by Virtue of a peculiar Appointment of the Father's, with his own free Consent. Nor could his Subjection to that Covenant, be upon his own Account, it must wholly be on Account of others, to redeem them from it, who, otherwise, inevitably would have perished under its Curse. Each of there Things is clearly expressed in these Words: *but when the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman; made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law* (Galatians 4:8). As the Manner of the Production of his human Nature, was extraordinary and peculiar, the Way of his coming under the Law was *peculiar* to himself, in order to a *special* End, wherein others are concerned, and not himself, *viz.* their Redemption from the Law, in the Form of a Covenant.

(3.) Our Redeemer obeyed the Law; or fulfilled the Terms of the Covenant. He was pure and holy in his Nature; *holy, harmless and undefiled, and separate from Sinners.* In his Conduct he was unblemished, *for he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth* (Isaiah 53:9). And he is *the End of the Law for Righteousness to every Believer:* And the Father is *well pleased for his Righteousness sake.* We are *justified in him*, and in him we have a proper Foundation to *Glory.*

(4.) He submitted to a very low and mean Condition. Our Saviour was *rich;* but for *our Sakes he became poor, that we, thro' his Poverty might be made rich.* He was Lord of *Glory,* and *Heir of all Things;* but possessed Nothing, hence, he says: *The Foxes have Holes, and the Fowls of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man bath not where to lay his Head.* And this was one Part of that Curse our Sins demerited.

**(5.)** The blessed Jesus was the Object of the greatest Contempt, Scorn and Reproach. He was *despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Griefs*. In a Way of Contempt he was called this *Fellow*, and *Deceiver*, and *a. gluttonous Man, and a Wine-bibber*, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners. On which Account he is represented, in Prophecy, as saying, *Reproach hath broken my Heart* (Psalms 69:20). Oh! the amazing Condescension of Christ, to endure *such Contradiction of Sinners, against himself*, with this kind View to save the *chief* of them.

**(6.)** His Sufferings and Death are included. *His Visage was so marred, more than any Man, and his Form more than the Sons of Men*. He suffered from Men, from Devils, from God himself, as a righteous Judge, taking vengeance on Sin in him; not his own, for he had none; but the Sins of others, which were imputed to him, or laid on him. He suffered in his Body the most acute Pains, and he suffered in his Soul: and those Sufferings of his Soul were far more grievous than his bodily Pains: *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death* (Matthew 26:38): *And, now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say?* (John 12:27) was the mournful Language of the suffering Redeemer. The extremest Pain, the greater Shame, and the forest Vengeance, all met in the Death of our gracious Saviour. And he for that *Joy*, that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame.

**3.** Salvation is effected by these Things. This Was not an unsuccessful and fruitless Attempt to save Sinners; but *real, full and everlasting Salvation is secured by Christ's coming into the World*. If he had not obtained eternal Redemption for us, he had never entered into Glory. To suppose, that certain Salvation is not effected, by this astonishing Transaction, is to eclipse the Glory of divine Grace, to impeach divine Wisdom, and to arraign and censure divine Justice, in the most stupendous of all its Acts.

**(1.)** Sin is expiated. The Removal of the Guilt of Sin, is a considerable Part of Salvation, and that is done by the Death of Christ. *When he had by himself purged our Sins* (Hebrews 1:3). *Once in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself* (Hebrews 9:26). And therefore, Sin is not imputed to those Persons, for whom Christ died. *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself not imputing their Trespasses unto them* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

**(2.)** Peace is made. One Branch of the Work of the Messiah, was to make *Reconciliation for Iniquity*. And this he did by his Sufferings and Death. *Having made Peace by the Blood of his Cross* (Colossians 1:20). So that both Law and Justice are satisfied, and

either hath any farther Demand to make. God as our righteous Judge is *pacified* towards us, for all that we have done: And there *is no fury in him*. It was not a procuring of Terms or Peace, that our Saviour died for us; but it was a making Peace. And Peace with God is a certain and immediate Effect of his Death, *and*, consequently, we are not obnoxious, to divine Wrath and Vengeance. *Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him* (Romans 5:9). The Chastisement of our Peace was upon *him*, *and with his Stripes we are healed* (Isaiah 53:5). There is now no Threatening of Punishment to the Saints, for *there is now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*: And hereafter, Penalty will not be inflicted on them, because complete Atonement is made for all their Sins, by the penal Sufferings of their Surety in their Stead. His Death is a full Security to them, from all Condemnation. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died* (Romans 8:34).)

(3.) An everlasting Righteousness is brought in Christ's Subjection to the Law, as in Form of a Covenant, could not be on his own Account His Dignity, State and right to Glory, arising from the Union of his two Natures, render'd that impossible; and, therefore, it was *solely* on the Account of others, whose Surety he was. His Obedience to the Covenant was commensurate to its Commands. And that Obedience he yielded to that Covenant, wholly for the sake of his People. The Father accepts it for them, imputes it to their Persons, and this Imputation of that, Obedience makes them righteous: *By one Man's Obedience shall many be made righteous* (Romans 5:19). These Particulars the *Messiah* was to do for his People. According to divine Promise and Prophecy he was *to finish Transgression, to make an End of Sin, to bring in an everlasting Righteousness, and to make Reconciliation Iniquity* (Daniel 9:24). *He has finished the Work* which the Father gave him to do, and, therefore, all there Things are done. And these Things being accomplished, *real, full, and certain* Salvation is obtained for all those Persons, on whose Account he was made under the Law; and, they all shall certainly receive the Adoption of Sons. This leads me to observe, farther,

(4.) Christ has a Right to demand Grace and Glory of the Father, in Behalf of all those Persons, for whom he obeyed and died. This Right arises from his punctual Performance of what was required of him to do, on Condition of which, the Father promised him, that he should *see his Seed, prolong his Days, and that his Pleasure should prosper in his Hand*. The fulfilling of the Conditions, whereon Benefits are promised, gives Right to those Benefits. And, therefore, since our Lord has exactly fulfilled the Conditions, on

which these Promises were made to him, he has a Right to demand the Benefits those Promises express; and accordingly he does: *Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me* (2 Corinthians 5:19). This not merely a Request, it is a *Demand*. I will. And this is comprehensive of Grace, by Which we are *made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: And of such Supplies of Grace, as are necessary to preserve us safe to the heavenly Kingdom and Glory. It includes the Whole of that Perfection and Blessedness whereof the Saints will eternally be possessed in their entire Persons. Their Bodies will be made like to Christ's *most glorious Body*, fit Receptacles of their perfected Spirits, and capable of beholding the Glory of their exalted Redeemer at the Father's Right Hand. It is the *Will* of the Father, *that of all which he hath given to Christ he should loose nothing; but that he shou'd raise it up again at the last Day*. This is an Obligation upon our Saviour, to take care, *even* of the Bodies of the Saints; Nor will he fail of executing the Will of the Father, in raising them from the State of the dead, with unspeakable Advantage. Besides, their Bodies are a Part of his Purchase, as Well as their Souls, and what he bought, at the Expence of his Blood, he certainly will take *especial* Care of: And, therefore, he will gather the scattered Particles of their precious Dust, and form their Bodies, which are now corruptible, and often dreadfully emaciated, by wasting Sickness, before their Dissolution, *immortal, spiritual, and inconceivably glorious*.

Christ will collect them all together, and bestow upon them all that Glory designed for them: And the View he will then have of his Seed, will fill him with the highest Pleasure. Then will he present them to the Father, saying, *Behold, I and the Children whom thou hast given me*. And this Presentation of them, will be made, with exceeding Joy (Jude 1:24). Then will be accomplished fully, the glorious Contrivances of eternal Love and infinite Wisdom concerning the Person of Christ and all his Members, wherein the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Church, and Angels will eternally rejoice. This Salvation is not only a Deliverance from the lowest Depths of Misery; but it is an Advancement to the greatest Heights of Glory, our Nature is capable of enjoying. It is a Glory suitable to the Relation of Sons, and is called the Adoption, i.e. the *Dignity, Honour, and Blessedness* of sons. It is a Glory suitable to the conjugal Relation between Christ and the Church, and that certainly must be very great. It is reasonable to think, that the Glory of the Saints, will exceed in Greatness that of the Angels. Because their Relation to God and Christ is nearer, than that those blessed Spirits enjoy. They are Sons to God, by Creation; but Believers are his Sons by Adoption, which constitutes them Heirs of God, and

Fellow-Heirs with Christ, which Creation doth not. Besides, as the Church is the Bride of Christ, and Angels are not taken into so near a Relation to him, there is Reason to conclude, that a Glory superior to that which Angels enjoy, will be conferred upon her, corresponding with her nearer Relation to the glorious Mediator. The *more close* and *intimate* the *Union* is, which is enjoyed with Christ, the Glory arising from it, doubtless, is the more abundant. It is proper, that the Spouse should be favoured with greater Nearness to her Husband, than Servants: Angels are Servants to Christ; but the Church is the *Lamb's Wife*; and, therefore, shall she be nearer to him, and enjoy his kinder Embraces, while the Angels will keep at a *respectful* and *humble* Distance both from *him* and *her*. And what adds much to the Wonder, and is a proper Ground of Encouragement, under a Sense of our Unworthiness, is this:

(5.) The chief of Sinners share in, or are the Subjects of this *great* Salvation. Christ came, not only to save such who were lost; but to save those who are guilty of the *foulest* Crimes, whose Offences are attended with the *most aggravating Circumstances*, and who have *long continued* in Rebellion against God. Publicans and Sinners, *i.e.* *notorious* Offenders, are the Objects of his Compassion, and obtain the Remission of their Sins thro' his Blood. He never did refuse, he never will refuse to receive kindly, the *greatest* Criminal, applying to him for Pardon, Peace, Grace, and eternal Salvation. *Whosoever will may take the Water of Life freely* (Revelation 22:17). The *greatest Unworthiness* is no Objection with Christ, to a *most welcome* Reception of those, who come unto him, on a Conviction of the Necessity of an Interest in him. Nothing is required to a Participation of his Benefits, but a Sense of Our Need of them, and a Will to receive them, as he communicates them, *viz.* freely, *without Money and without Price* (Isaiah 55:1)..

The Salvation of the *Chief of Sinners* is agreeable to the impulsive, the meritorious, and final Causes of it.

1. It well suits with the impulsive Cause, and is a glorious Display of it. That is no other than the free and rich Goodness, Grace and Mercy of God: *By Grace are we saved*. And the Pardon of Sin and *Redemption thro' the Blood of Christ, is according to the Riches of the Grace of God* (Ephesians 1:7). Infinite Compassion alone, could so far extend itself, as to forgive the *Worst* of Sinners. The abounding Sinfulness and Sins of notorious Offenders, require the Exercise of superabounding Grace. What but the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God could raise and cherish in the Breast of a Sinner, conscious of *heinous, repeated, and highly aggravated Crimes*, the least Hope of Forgiveness? Nothing. This was *David's* Ground of Hope, and the Matter of his Plea. *Have Mercy upon me, O God,*

*according to thy loving Kindness: According unto the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Transgressions* (Psalms 51:1). Since we are required to forgive an offending Brother, not only *until seven Times*, but *until seventy Times Seven*, who are too backward thro' the *Scantiness* of our Compassion to a forgiving Temper; surely God, whose Mercy is *immense*, will extend Pardon to the *greatest Sinners*. *Where Sin has abounded, Grace will much more abound; that as Sin has reigned unto Death, even so Grace may reign thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 5:20,21). God will stand as much distinguished from all his Creatures in *Acts of Pardon*, as in *Acts of Power*. If the *Chief* of Sinners should not be saved, it might be thought that divine Grace hath its Limits which it can't exceed; but no Room shall be left to Men to admit a Thought so *derogatory* to its Glory, which appears as much in its extensive Exercise in pardoning, as it does, in its Freedom and Sovereignty.

**2.** The Salvation of the *Chief* of Sinners is to the Glory of the meritorious Cause. That is the Blood of Christ. The infinite Dignity of his Person, gives infinite Worth to his Sufferings; and, therefore, they were as sufficient to discharge a Debt of *ten thousand Talents*, as of *fifty Pence*. 'Tis not the *Nature* of our Sins, nor their *Number*, nor their *Aggravations*, can hinder our Pardon and Salvation, since a Sacrifice of *immense* Value has been offered to God for their Atonement. He who is the *mighty God, is mighty to save; able to save even to the uttermost*; so that no Guilt is so great; but the Death of the Son of God is sufficient to atone for it. *The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.*

**3.** This suits with the final Cause of our Salvation. (1.) Respecting God. His supreme End in the Scheme of our Recovery is his own Glory. The Glory of all his infinite Perfections. His Wisdom, Holiness and Justice, and Truth and Faithfulness; but he peculiarly aimed at the Display of the *Glory of his Grace and Mercy*. The Salvation of any sinner, as to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace; but the Salvation of the *Chief of Sinners* is *eminently* to the Praise of that Glory. (2.) The End relating to Christ is his Honour, in the Character of a Redeemer. *His Glory is great in our Salvation* (Psalms 21:5) The Remission of the worst and most aggravated Offences thro' his Sufferings, is a full Proof of their infinite Merit and extensive Efficacy. And, that the meritorious Cause of our Salvation is not below the impulsive Cause of it. (3.) The final Cause respecting us, was our Abasement in our own Sight, and a holy Trust in and Admiration of the infinitely rich Grace and Mercy of God, as acting in our Saviour thro' Christ. These Ends are fully secured by the Salvation of the *Chief of Sinners*, thro' his Obedience

and Sacrifice. For upon this View, we take Shame to ourselves, and adore the Riches of divine Grace, and the infinite Merit of our most merciful Redeemer.

Our adoring Language to God is: *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give Glory* (Psalms 115:1). And to Christ: *Unto him, that hath loved and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever, Amen* (Revelation 1:5,6). These Ends are all brought about; by the Salvation of the Chief of Sinners, and they are such as it became the Wisdom of God to design in this wonderful Transaction.

**V. An Assurance of Salvation thro' Christ is very consistent with an Apprehension of our being the Chief of Sinners.** The Apostle accounted himself the Chief, or greatest of Sinners, and yet, the Life lived, it was by the Faith of the Son of God. He doubted not of an Interest in a Saviour, under the deep Sense he had of his Sins and Sinfulness. It is not unusual with those, who enjoy the clearest Evidence of an Interest in divine Favour to consider themselves most deserving. of divine Vengeance. The strongest Faith may very well consist with a Sense of the greatest Unworthiness; because it is founded on infinite Grace, and infinite Merit, to which no Difficulties are insurmountable.

This Assurance is not essential to Faith. True Faith may be where that is not.

**1.** Faith is a Dependance on Christ alone for Salvation, upon a Conviction of our Misery. A Conviction and Sense of our Misery necessarily precedes the Act of Faith on Christ, as a Saviour. Until we are sensible of our being miserable and helpless in ourselves, we shall not be persuaded, of the Necessity of a sole Trust in another for Help and Succour. *They that be whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick* This Conviction is becoming *dead to the Law*, and it, is effected by a Work of the Law upon the Heart, in the Hand of the blessed Spirit. *I thro' the Law, am dead to the Law*, The Mind of a Sinner is impressed with a wounding Sense of his Guilt. His Sins are fit in order before him. And he clearly discerns, that he stands righteously condemned by the holy Law of God, for his numerous Violations of it. Upon which he acknowledges, that it would be just with God to punish him, *in particular*, with everlasting Destruction from his Presence, and from the Glory of his Power. In this Work upon him he is convinced *the Plague of his Heart*, as well as of the Transgressions of his Life. In that divine Light which is communicated to the Soul, he discovers the exceeding Sinfulness of Sin, and the exceeding Sinfulness of his Heart; and the Spirituality,

Purity, and Extent of the Law; whereupon, he concludes, that it is absolutely impossible, that one so vile as he is, should ever be able to recommend himself to, or interest himself in, the Approbation of God his righteous Judge, Thus he sees his lost and miserable, and helpless Condition in himself, and dies to all Hope of Life, by his own Righteousness and Works. When the holy Spirit hath in this Manner, convinced a Man of his deplorable State by Nature; and his *Heart is overwhelmed*, he leads him to *the Rock that is higher than he*. He makes a gracious Discovery of Christ to the Soul, in his Blood, Righteousness, and in the Fulness of his Grace. And, then the Language of a poor trembling Sinner is: My Sins are many, great, and dreadfully aggravated; but the Blood of Christ hath a Sufficiency of Merit in it to atone for them all. In myself I have no Righteousness, nor can have, whereby I may be Justified in the Sight of God; but the Righteousness of Christ , is every way sufficient to justify me before God, and to give me a Right to Life, who am worthy of Death. My Heart is impure, and *without Holiness* I shall never see *the Lord*. That Treasure of Grace which is in Christ, it is sufficient to make me holy, and *meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. Besides, in the Light of this Grace, a Person discerns, in some Measure, how God is glorified; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all the divine Perfections, Goodness, Grace, Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Truth and Faithfulness, in this Way of Salvation; and herein he rejoices, even tho' *himself* should not be a Sharer in it. The holy Resolution of the Soul upon this View of Things, is, to renounce, all other Ways of Relief, which may be proposed to its Consideration, and to cleave to Christ alone, as the only proper Object of his Hope; this it is to flee to him for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before us. And this is that Faith, which is of the Operation of God and is peculiar to the Objects of a divine Choice to eternal Salvation, for which Reason, it is called *the Faith of God's Elect*. And, therefore, we observe,

**2.** Where there is this Dependence, there is a proper Foundation for Assurance. Persons thus wrought upon, and influenced to such holy Actings of Soul towards Christ, as a Saviour, have that in them, which is in itself, a clear and sufficient Evidence of an Interest in him, and in his Salvation, tho' they may not discern that Evidence; nor be so ready to allow it an Evidence, as they ought to be, thro' Darkness, Jealousy of themselves, and Fears of being mistaken, in an Affair of so great Importance. This solemn and humble Application to Christ, for Pardon, Peace, Righteousness, Grace and Holiness, under a Sense of our Misery and Helplessness, is the Effect of a super-natural Work upon us: Coming to Christ follows upon divine Drawing. *For no Man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him*. .And this heavenly Attraction is a Fruit of

everlasting Love: *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, and, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee.* If we are drawn with the *Cords of Love; with the Bands of a Man*, 'tis because we are Objects of Love. If we come to Christ, approve of him and cleave to him, it is a certain Consequence of our having *seen, and heard, and learned of the Father*. And, therefore, it must necessarily be an Evidence, that we are passed from *Death to Life, and that we shall not come into Condemnation*. Besides, Christ has declared expressly, that he will in no wise, i.e. upon no Consideration, on any Accounts, *cast. out those who come to him.*

If therefore, he should not receive and save us, his Veracity would be impeach'd. With Reverence, I desire to speak it, If any one Soul, at the last Day, shall be able to stand up and say to him, upon a Conviction of my Sins; Sinfulness, and Inability to help myself, I applied to thee for Salvation, being encouraged so to do, by thy Declaration, that thou wouldest not cast out him that comes to thee; but I am now lost for ever, because thou hast refused to receive and save me, Christ would be proved guilty of a Breach of Truth in the View of Angels and Men. But this can never be, we are confident. And, consequently; this gracious Work upon the Soul, is in itself, a full and certain Evidence of an Interest in his Love, Care, Tenderness and Compassion, and is a proper Foundation of Assurance of Salvation by and thro' him.

**3.** Faith sometimes rises up to this Assurance of Salvation. Some lately risen up among us, who have had the *Vanity* to take to themselves the Name of *Reformers*, assert that it is of the Essence of Faith, and that there is nothing of Faith, or Holiness, where there is not a Confidence of being saved. And many of them make large Pretensions to such an Assurance. But ask them what Convictions of Sin, what a Sense of their Misery and Helplessness, what Views of Christ and spiritual Things have preceded this their Confidence? And they can give you but a very slender Account of either of these Things. Ask them how they came by this Assurance? By what Means it was begotten in them, and what is the Foundation of it? They are not able to return you any solid Answer. Assured and confident of being saved they are, but they cannot tell how they came to be so assured. Ask them what Effects this their Assurance has produced in them? They are at a stand, and can make you no Reply; which ought to be satisfactory to a Christian. This among many other Things, make it evident, that we are referred to live in Times, wherein Errors of all Kinds abound. I make no Question, but that some Saints are favoured with this full Assurance of Faith, and are able to say with the Apostle, concerning their dear Redeemer, *who loved me and gave himself for me*, and as the Church my

*beloved is mine and I am his.* The Happiness they desire, they see to be theirs. And, that Christ has *set them as a Seal upon his Heart, and as a Signet upon his Arm.* That he neither will, nor can forget them, nor cease to employ his Power in their Protection and Defence.

*They know and believe the Love that God hath to them. They dwell in his Love, and in him, and are persuaded, that nothing shall separate them, from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.* Thus the Holy Spirit bears witness with their Spirits, that they are Sons of God. And, therefore, they enjoy much of Heaven in their Way thither. But this is not the Case of all the Saints; and Faith of the Operation of God, *often is*, where this Assurance is not. Tho', as I have said, there is a proper Foundation for it, in the Souls of all those whose Dependence is on Christ for Salvation, upon a Sense of their Misery, a View of his Glory and Suitableness, as a Saviour, to the Wants of their Souls in particular. Farther, frequent Actings of the Faith of Recumbency on Christ, *usually raise* in the Mind, some Degree of this Assurance, or a comfortable Hope of obtaining Salvation thro' him.

**VI. The Report is true, πιστό ο Λογότητα, a true Saying, and worthy of the most grateful Reception, that Christ came into the World, to save the Chief, or greater of Sinners.**

1. This Report is true, and may safely be depended on. Abundant Proof is given of its Verity, and in a Variety of Ways.

(1.) By the Testimony of Angels. A Multitude of those blessed Spirits, descended from Heaven, at the Birth of our Saviour, and celebrated, with an holy Adoration, the gracious Design of his Incarnation, and declare that it was to render sinful Men happy, as an Effect of the good Pleasure of God towards them. *And suddenly there was with the Angel, a Multitude of the heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on the Earth Peace, and Good-Will towards Men* (Luke 2:13,14).

(2.) The Truth of this most astonishing Report is fully proved by Divine Promises. Remission of Sin is promised in the most full and explicite Manner, by God himself, who cannot lye. And not only Pardon but multiplied Pardon. God so expresses himself upon this Subject, as is sufficient to convince us, if we are to be convinced, that his Design in the Exercise of forgiving Mercy, far transcends those limited Thoughts, we are apt to form and cherish concerning it. *Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: Let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my*

*Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways, saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts* (Isaiah 55:7,8,9). When we have stretched our Conceptions as far as we can, concerning the pardoning Grace of God, we are as much below its real Extent, as the Distance of the Heavens is from the Earth: So he plainly tells us, who will not, nor can deceive us. And, therefore, there is not the least Room left us, to admit a Scruple concerning the Pardon and Salvation of the *chief* of Sinners. His Promise is a sufficient Security, for he cannot violate it; but he has confirmed it, *with his Oath, that by two immutable Things, wherein it is impossible for him to lye, we. might have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay bold on the Hope set before us.* This is amazing Condescension and Goodness!

(3.) Divine Predictions may be offered in Confirmation of this Truth. The Prophet *Isaiah* not only describes in a very particular Manner the Sufferings of the Messiah, when he should appear; but he gives the Character of the Persons, for whom he was to suffer, and for whom he would intercede with God. *And made Intercession for the Transgressors* (Isaiah 53:12). פָשָׁע, i.e. for the rebellious. For such who were his Murderers, and imbrued their Hands in his Blood. According unto this Prediction of the Prophet, our Saviour, when on the Cross, put up this Request to God: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:24).

(4.) Many stupendous Miracles were wrought to confirm this Truth. That great Salvation whereof the Gospel is a Report, so far exceeds our Imagination, that we are very slow in giving Credit to it. To the End, that the Truth of this Report might be established, beyond all modest Contradiction, the holy Spirit hath given his Witness to it, by a Multitude of miraculous Operations. *God also bearing them witness both with Signs and Wonders, and with diverse Miracles, and Gifts of the holy Ghost, according*" to his own Will (Hebrews 2:4).

(5.) The Author of this Salvation, has not been wanting to give in his Testimony to this most precious Truth. And we know that his Witness is true; for he is *the Truth*, and, therefore, his Testimony cannot be false: He is *the faithful Witness* (Revelation 1:5). Christ has plainly and fully informed us, that the *largest Debts* are forgiven: Or that Pardon is extended to the greatest Sinners; And, that in Consequence of *much* being forgiven; *much* Love is engenerated in the Hearts of pardoned ones. *Five Hundred Pence* are as *freely forgiven as fifty*, our Lord assures us (Luke 8:41). And, consequently, Pardon is not limited to *smaller* Offenders; but it is extended to the greatest Transgressors. He certainly knew, whole

Sins are remitted, thro' whole Blood Remission is obtained. Shall we then admit the least Doubt of the Salvation of the Chief of Sinners? Surely not; since we cannot do it, without invalidating the Testimony of him, thro' whom Salvation is enjoyed.

(6.) The State and Work of Christ when he was here, give the fuller Evidence, that his coming was to accomplish such a Design. He was constituted *Heir of all Things*, and was *Lord of Glory*, when he possessed nothing; and became the Object of Scorn, Reproach and Shame among Men. His Subjection and Obedience to the Covenant of Works, which we have violated, were not on his own Account; to imagine, that he came under that Covenant, upon his own Account, divests him of that Right to Life, Happiness, and Glory, which is inseparable from his Person, as God and Man; and subverts all our Hope of Salvation, by any Thing he did or suffered. He was made under the Law, not only to obey it, but also to suffer its Curse; or to endure the Penalty it threatens upon a Breach of its Precepts. This could not have been with a View to himself, if he had been no more than a Man, since he was innocent. For it is contrary to Justice to make Innocency subject to a Curse, and, therefore, his being made a Curse, is in itself a clear Demonstration, that so he was made for Sinners, in order to their Redemption from it.

(7.) The Exaltation of Christ, and the Glory which followed upon it, is a pregnant Proof of this Truth. When he had completed the Work of our Redemption on Earth, he ascended to Heaven, and took Possession of that Glory which was his due. And he is to be considered as our *Fore-runner* in his Entrance into the World above, and as the public Head and Representative of all those for whom he had offered himself as a Sacrifice to God, Hence, we are laid to *fit together in heavenly Places in Christ. He is entered not into the holy Places made with Hands, which were the Figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us* (Hebrews 9:24). This Admission of Christ to Heaven, and his taking the Possession of Glory in the Name, and as the Forerunner of Sinners, is an undeniable Proof of his having obtained Salvation for them. For which Reason the Apostle *Peter* makes it a Ground of Christian Trust and Confidence. *Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead and gave him Glory that your Faith and Hope might be in God* (1 Peter 1:22). Consequent upon this Exaltation of our Saviour, an eminent Glory attended his Church below. The Holy Spirit was poured forth in an extraordinary Manner, both in his Graces and Gifts, which was a clear Proof, that he had done every thing requisite to the Salvation of Sinners. And, that the Father highly approved of his executing his Will, in the Redemption of the Objects of his Favour from Misery. What an admirable

Concurrence of the most cogent Proofs are given of this glorious Truth, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save the *chief* of Sinners? If therefore we disbelieve it, we must be exceedingly culpable, for we shall make God himself a *Lyar*, who has in such a Variety of Ways given his Testimony in Confirmation of this most precious Truth. And this is an Instance of his infinite Condescension, Goodness, Compassion and tender Care of his People! that their Souls may have Support, Relief, and Consolation, under a Sense of what above all Things occasions their Minds the greatest Distress, *viz.* their Guilt and Sinfulness.

2. This Report is worthy of the most grateful Reception. It consists of Principles, which are calculated to promote the Glory of God, in a most eminent Manner. The Glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the Glory of all the divine Perfections, far above any other of the Designs of God. Besides, it is the Foundation of all the spiritual Peace, Rest, Consolation and Joy, which the Saints are favoured with, in this World, and it is the Ground of their Hopes of the Enjoyment of future Blessedness; and, therefore, it is highly deserving of the most grateful Reception. But,

(1.) Some reject it, yea the most, the Generality. Christ as crucified, is a *Stone of stumbling and a Rock of Offence*, to many who make Pretensions to Christianity. The *Mysteries* relating to his Person, Work, and the admirable Effects of his Mediation, are accounted *unintelligible* and *absurd* Notions. And the Saints Experience of Consolation, Peace and Joy, in believing in him, as the Gospel represents him, as pronounced a fond Imagination and Enthusiasm, by Multitudes, who yet would be esteemed Christians. No unregenerate Man receives the Things of the Spirit of God, nor is he able to understand them. Without supernatural Light Men may know the Truth of the sublime Doctrines of the Christian Revelation; but that greatly differs from an Understanding of the Things themselves. The Truth of the Things of the Spirit hath such Evidence in the Scripture, as is suited and sufficient to procure an Assent to it from all Minds, which are free from Prejudice, and, therefore, unregenerate Persons may, and it is reasonable to require and expect them to yield an Assent to the Truth of those Things. But the Things themselves they can never understand. No, not the most *intelligent* and *knowing* Part of Mankind. The Things themselves often *are hid from the wise and prudent*, while they *are revealed unto Babes*, i.e. Persons of mean Capacities, and of little Improvement. The *most learned* among Mankind are not more capable of understanding heavenly Things, than the *weakest, silliest Creatures* in the World are. Nor is any Branch of what we call *Learning*, possessed in how great Eminency soever, suited to increase our Knowledge of this

Kind. A Consideration sufficient this is, one would think, to humble the Pride of Men's Hearts, which springs up in them on Account of their *learned* Accomplishments. He must be an absolute Stranger to the *theological* Writings of *learned* Men, or not exercise his *Reason in* reading them, who does not discern, that *Learning* is not a sufficient Preservative, even from *Dotage, Childishness* and *Absurdity* in the Things of God. They deliver themselves so *foolishly*, on many of those Subjects, that if they were not had in Repute for Learning, what they say would be despised, and themselves would fall under Contempt, and not unjustly, for, not to say, reasoning, but cavilling, as they do. If we have no supernatural Principle in us, we shall not, we will not, we cannot approve, embrace, adhere to, nor take the least Delight in Spiritual Things themselves. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The *learned*, therefore, have no Advantage above the *unlearned*, as to the understanding of the Mysteries of the *Kingdom*. And, consequently, the rude and unpolished, may know those *Mysteries*, and such, who on Account of their Superior Talents are greatly admired, may be as *blind* to those Things, as *Bats*, or *Moles*. *An high Way shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it; it shall be for those, way-faring Men, tho' Fools, shall not err therein.*

(2.) A few receive this Report most joyfully, with the highest Gratitude, approve of it, admire and adore it. By a Communication of divine Light to our Understanding, we become capable of seeing our true State by Nature; the Excellency and Glory of this Way of Salvation by Christ. And that gracious Work upon us, which furnishes our Minds with spiritual Knowledge, sanctifies our Wills to chuse, and causes our Affections to cleave to, and delight in those Things, which our Minds discern the Excellency and Glory of. For Grace conveyed in Regeneration, is a sanctifying Principle, to our whole Souls, and, therefore, every Faculty acts in a spiritual Manner, about, towards, and upon spiritual Things, in Consequence of this Work in us. That which is Light in the understanding, is Holiness in the Will, and it is Spirituality in the Affections. If this had been duly attended to, some unprofitable Disputes concerning Faith, would never have taken place among *learned* Men.

Those Truths which many; yea the Generality of such who are called Christians, esteem *Foolishness*, Persons spiritually enlightened, account most sacred. They discover the infinite Riches of divine Grace, the unfathomable Depths of divine Wisdom, and the Holiness, Justice, and Truth, and Faithfulness of God, which have a

most illustrious Display therein, and, therefore, their holy Souls approve of, admire and adore those *blessed* Truths, which they plainly see are incomprehensible. Some there are, I dare say, who take the highest Satisfaction in there Things, because of that peculiar Glory, Which arises to God from them; and will still continue so to do, let a Generation of *formal and nominal* Christians, call them by what Names they shall please, on Account of this their Faith and Hope, in God and Christ. Of this Number was the Person whose Death occasioned this Discourse.

She was many Years a Member of this Community. Her Character was ornamental to her Profession, without any Fear of being charged with a Breach of Truth, I may say, that her *Conversation was as it becometh the Gospel of Christ*. It is, If I remember right, now near nine Years since she had a very fore Fit of Sickness, which in the Apprehension of others, and in her own, was likely to have issued in her Dissolution. It was the Pleasure of God, at that Time, to favour her With extraordinary Discoveries of *his Love*, and with an Assurance of everlasting Salvation thro' Christ, under a most humble Sense of her own great Unworthiness, The Words on which I have been discoursing, she then pronounced with *a very striking Accent*, and declared her Desire, that they might be preached from on the Occasion of her Death, if she was removed; and this has been her Desire ever since. She never lost the Sweetness and Savour of those gracious Visits she then enjoyed. She had not a great Deal of Conversation, nor did she desire much; because, but *little* which is *spiritual* to be met with. She would often say, *I am the chief of Sinners, and have the greatest Reason to admire at the Grace of God, in saving me. And my Praises in Heaven will have the highest Note of any there.* Her Soul was frequently filled with an adoring Sense of distinguishing Favour, and she expressed it in the Language of the inspired Writer. *He takes One of a Family, Two of a Tribe, and brings them to Zion.* Her last Illness Was long and heavy, in which she was very comfortable. In a Visit I made her some time before her Death, I found her filled with Joy, at the Thoughts of its being near. *I am going, said she, I hope, in a few Hours. It might be* (that is the Sentence) depart from me, thou Worker of Iniquity; but it will be, Come thou blessed of my Father. Strike, Death, strike; not that I want to be out of my Pain, but I want to be praising my Lord. Glory to the Father, Glory to the Son, Glory to the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one God. She said again thus, Glory to the Father, Glory to the Son, Glory to the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one God. And now I must deliver what may not improperly be called her dying Request; it was this: *Do you tell the Saints, that the Sweet Doctrine of the free Grace of God, which you have preached has been the Comfort of my Soul, and is now on a Death-bed: and, while you are*

*preaching, I shall be singing. It can't be otherwise, for his Covenant he will not break. He cannot deny himself. I have nothing to carry, not a Thought, but Sin, and that I shall drop.* Thus the exulted, when she thought Death to be very near. I saw her several Times after this, and tho' she was not so full of Triumph, she enjoyed solid Peace and Comfort; and declared, *that she did not desire in the least a Return.* Taking Notice of her poor emaciated Body, she sometimes said, *it is the Purchase of Christ, and be will change this vile Body, and fashion it like unto his most glorious Body.* Thus she lived by Faith, and departed in the steady and vigorous Exercise of that Grace.

Oh! the Happiness of those pious Souls, whose Trust is in Christ, thro' him they are *more than Conquerors* over all their Spiritual Enemies. And in the Exercise of Faith upon him, they can triumph in the Views, and at the nearest Approach of Death. May we be enabled through divine Grace, to follow those, who thro' *Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.*

# SERMON 11

## HEBREWS 12:14

“Follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness; without which no Man shall See the Lord.”

### THE NATURE OF TRUE HOLINESS EXPLAINED

IN A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED AT A MONTHLY EXERCISE  
OF PRAYER, WITH A SERMON, ON THE TWENTIETH OF  
APRIL, 1749.

#### PREFACE.

*It is an Observation, which I have long made, that those who are charged with being licentious in their Principles, at least, because of their firm Attachment to the Doctrines of the true Grace of God, always express an Approbation of real Holiness: And that Discourses of Evangelical Obedience, are sure to meet with a cordial Reception from them, when others of different Sentiments about the Doctrines of the Grace of God, discover a Dislike to such Discourses. The Reason of which is, I am persuaded, the former really understand the Nature of Holiness, approve of, and aspire after true Purity, and that the latter are both ignorant of it, and Enemies to it. The Consideration of this alone, prevented my being Surprized that I should be desir'd to publish this Discourse. I believe, that those whole Desire this was, are much concerned to promote true Holiness, both of Heart and Life; and that, under the Influence of this Principle, they moved for this Publication, as what, in their very candid Opinion, might, thro' the divine Blessing, in some Measure, be subservient to that important Purpose. That this pious View may be answered by it, I trust, is the sincere Desire and Prayer of its unworthy Author,*

J . B.

*The inspired Writer, in this Chapter, offers various Things to the Consideration of the Hebrews, in order to animate and encourage them under those Afflictions which they suffered, viz. that God was their compassionate Father, that he was determined to do them Good by all his Dispensations towards them: Particularly, that he designed to make them Partakers of his Holiness, by those Afflictions. And he exhorts them to endeavour to strengthen one another's Hands under Weakness and Fainting. In the Words which we have read, he*

*recommends to them, the cultivating of Peace with all Men, and a Pursuit after Holiness, as what is necessary to future Happiness.*

**I.** *We ought diligently to cultivate Peace with all Men.* The Saints are the Children of the God of Peace, and the Subjects of the Prince of Peace, and therefore it becomes them to be careful to promote Amity and Friendship with all. This is to be done,

**1.** By declining every thing which may irritate and provoke both in Words and Actions: All just Occasions of Offence are carefully to be avoided: A wrathful and injurious Temper is not by any means to be indulged, if we would preserve Peace among those with whom we are conversant.

**2.** We must be ready to perform all good Offices for all. It is not enough, that we be inoffensive and harmless in our Behaviour, but we must do Good to all: ‘Tis our Duty to imitate our Heavenly Father, by the Exercise of universal Benevolence and Goodness. *He maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just, and on the Unjust; and we ought to love our Enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do Good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us.* (Matthew 5:44,45). Farther,

**II.** *The inspired Writer recommends an earnest Endeavour after Holiness. It was my Design principally to insist on this second Part of the Subject, and, therefore, I have thus hastened to it. And, I propose,*

**First**, To consider the Causes of Holiness.

**Secondly**, The Nature of it, or what it is.

**Thirdly**, I would shew, that we ought diligently to endeavour after it.

**Fourthly**, That without it no Man shall see the Lord

**First, I am to consider the Causes of Holiness.**

We have lost that which was the true Glory of our Nature, *viz.* our original Rectitude and Righteousness; *The Crown is fallen from our Head; woe unto us, for we are spoiled!* Let us then attend unto the Consideration of the Causes of Holiness, wherein consists the true Exaltation of our Nature, which is dreadfully debased by Sin; the *impulsive, procuring, efficient, and instrumental* Causes or Means of that Purity which is absolutely necessary to future Blessedness.

**1.** The impulsive Cause, is the eternal Goodwill and Grace of God exerting itself in the Election of our Persons to everlasting Life; *God*

*hath from the Beginning chosen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit* (2 Thessalonians 2:13): And the Apostle affirms, that he chose us, that we might be holy. Our holy Vocation is according to his Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the World began (2 Timothy 1:9): Hence the Character of the Saints is, *the Called according to his Purpose*. Let some suggest what they please against the Doctrine of Election, as calculated to encourage Sloth, Negligence, and Carelessness in the Minds of those who believe themselves to be included in that gracious Decree; since it is an Appointment to a Participation of Holiness in order to Happiness, that is an entirely groundless Calumny; it is the Origin from which true Holiness springs; nor is there any thing of it in this World, but what is derived from that Fountain; and that which is the Cause of Holiness, cannot reasonably be thought of a Nature suited to encourage the Practice of its direct Contrary, *viz.* Sin.

**2.** The procuring Cause of real Holiness, is the Death and Satisfaction of Christ. Tho' it is true, that the Sufferings of our Saviour did not cause a Will in God to communicate the Blessings of Grace and Glory to his People, yet his Atonement is the Foundation on which they are all conveyed to them. Hence is that Prayer of the inspired Writer in Behalf of the Hebrews: *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight* (Hebrews 13:20,21). In that eternal Covenant which was entered into by the Father and Christ, it was a Condition required of him, and agreed to by him, to make his Soul an Offering for Sin, and a Promise was made him, that on this Condition he should have the Satisfaction of seeing his Seed Participants of Holiness and Happiness. This Condition is fulfilled, hence he has a Right to expect the Fulfilment of that Promise relating to them all; nor can the Father, in Justice, fail of the Performance of his Promise. That invaluable Price which was paid for the Redemption of our Persons from Misery, ascertains our Participation of Holiness here, and complete Happiness hereafter.

**3.** The efficient Cause of true Holiness is the Spirit of God; Grace in the Mind of a poor Sinner, is his Production; hence we are said to be *born of the Spirit*. Some speak of Grace, as being *partly acquired, and partly infused*: I greatly question whether this agrees with good Sense, and the Nature of Things in relation to Habits of the Mind. It may be, that no Habit of our Minds is partly infused, and partly acquired; but that all Habits are either wholly infused, or wholly acquired. That a Man may be assisted in the acquiring of Habits, is easy of Apprehension; but that because Assistance is afforded to a

Person in the acquiring of an Habit, it should be said that, that Habit was partly infused, and partly acquired, seems not to me to agree with good Sense, and the Nature of Things. However, this is not the Case here; so far as any Habit is *acquired*, it is not infused: And if Holiness of Heart is partly infused, and partly acquired, then it will follow, not only that in Part we make ourselves to differ; but also, that holy Acts may be performed, where there is no holy Principle, which cannot be. The Saints are said to be *new Creatures*, because they are *the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*, and the Holy Spirit is the Author of our Regeneration. Grace in the Heart is the Effect of his gracious Operation upon us; *That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*. If there is any Thing in us of a truly spiritual Nature, it is the Produce of the Spirit of God, for we are naturally *Flesh*; the very *Reverse* of what is *holy and Spiritual*.

4. The instrumental Causes, or Means of our Improvement in Holiness are various, *viz.* the Gospel; that alone is the Food of the new Creature, and suited to feed and nourish, and invigorate the Principle of Grace in the Hearts of Believers, and, therefore, the Apostle exhorts us, *as new born Babes, to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby* (1 Peter 2:2): And our dear Lord prays the Father to *Sanctify, his People thro' his Truth, whose Word is Truth* (John 17:17). It is in vain to hope for an Increase of Grace in the Heart, without receiving, feeding upon, and digesting the Doctrines of Grace. Again, The sacred Institutions of Christ are appointed to this End. In those sacred Rites, Christ Is represented in his Person, Offices, Work, and Benefits, and Grace; and, therefore, they are adapted wifely to corroborate the Heaven-born Principle in our Souls. Farther, the afflictive Dispensations of Providence are graciously designed to this Purpose. Sometimes, it is the Pleasure of God to throw his Children into the Furnace of Affliction, there *to try them, as Gold is tried*. In their better Part they suffer no Loss, but are Gainers; all his Corrections are intended for their Good, and, under his Blessing, are subservient to that End; thereby, as it is declared in the Context, they become *Partakers of his Holiness*. And, they are purified from their Dross; *By this shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the Fruit, to take away his Sin* (Isaiah 27:9); a blessed Fruit of Affliction this. The Christian, if he does not give Thanks to God for the Matter of the Affliction, he will for the Advantage which he gains to his nobler Part thereby. Besides, spiritual and holy Conversation tends to promote Holiness; *No corrupt Communication ought to proceed out of our Mouths; but such as is good to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace to the Hearers*: There are the Causes of Holiness, supreme and subordinate.

The Nature of true Holiness, as I apprehend, is very much mistaken by many, and that is thought to be Holiness, which hath not any Thing of that Kind in it, and, therefore, an Enquiry into the Nature of Holiness, which we are exhorted to follow after, may be proper and beneficial. I proceed then,

**Secondly, To shew what true Holiness is: And I would do this negatively and positively.**

1. Negatively: This is to be done in several Particulars, *viz.*

(1.) What Men usually call Virtue, is not Holiness. By this I intend the Propriety and Impropriety of Things, in relation to human Actions; this is very often called, in our Times, the Fitness and Unfitness of Things; this Action is fit to be done, and the other is unfit. Now this is an abstracted Consideration of Actions, as in themselves, without Regard to the governing Authority of God in his Law; and, therefore, it is at a very great Remove from Holiness, which is an Obedience to the Will and Command of that infinite Being, on whom we are absolutely dependent. Hence it follows, that a Man may be virtuous, or practise what is fit to be done, and decline doing what is unfit to be acted, without the least Degree of that Holiness, concerning which the Enquiry is.

(2.) Legal Obedience, which rises higher than the former, is not Holiness. The Light of natural Conscience may be much heightened and improved by the Word of God, and a Man's Sins may be let in Order before him: He also may have an awful View of their Demerit, which will awaken dreadful Fears, and influence him to make an Enquiry how he may *escape the Damnation of Hell*. In this Enquiry he presently apprehends and concludes, that an Alteration in his Behaviour is necessary, and he determines with himself, that he will immediately change the Course of his Actions, decline what is evil, and perform what is good. Upon doing which, he begins to cherish Hopes of regaining an Interest in divine Favour; on this Principle, that God is a merciful Being, and will make all reasonable Allowances for his necessary and unavoidable Imperfections, and for all those numerous Temptations, wherewith he finds himself surrounded in every State. This indeed is the common Doctrine of our *sad Times*. Such Persons doubt not, but that if they do the best they are able in their present Circumstances, God will be favourable to them in Judgment, and cry to themselves, *Peace, Peace*, tho' certain Destruction, if rich and sovereign Mercy prevents not, awaits them. Sometimes, they proceed so far as to celebrate the sacred Rites of Christianity, and in their own, and in the Opinion of others also, they commence true Christians; whereas all their Obedience is carnal, and arises from the Flesh. As one well observes, *they obey,*

*not because they love the Gospel; but because they fear the Law.* This it is to follow after the Law of Righteousness, as the Jews did, who attained not to the Law of Righteousness, because the fought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law (Romans 9:31,32). Lust, notwithstanding this Change in a Person, if it retains its Dominion in the Heart, and will so do, until sovereign and efficacious Grace takes it away, and brings a Man to submit to be saved in the Way of God's Appointment. Sin still perserves its Rule in the Mind, tho' the Form of its Government is altered, and none of the Actions of such a one are holy, they all spring from a selfish Principle, and are directed to selfish Ends, which is not serving God, but is a Man's Aim to serve himself. This legal Obedience, therefore, hath not any Thing of true Holiness in it.

(3.) The Knowledge of the Truth of Evangelical Doctrines is not Holiness; Orthodoxy is not Grace; nor is Soundness of Judgment, Holiness. The Perception of the Evidence of divine Truths, is the Business of Reason, not of Grace. A Man, therefore, who hath no Principle of Holiness in him, may discern that Evidence, and the strict Connection, Dependence and Harmony of the several Branches of Evangelical Truth, and give an assent unto those Truths, tho' the Things themselves he is wholly unacquainted with. It is a sad Mistake to think that we are holy Persons, because we are persuaded of the Truth of Gospel Mysteries, for that Persuasion springs up in the Mind from Acts merely rational upon the Evidence Revelation affords of the Truth of those mysterious Doctrines. Where there is not a spiritual understanding of spiritual Things, and a Savour and Relish of them as such, there is no true Holiness.

(4.) Gifts, and the Exercise of them, is not Grace or Holiness. By Gifts, I mean an Ability to discourse of Gospel Doctrines in such a Manner, as may be very instructive and beneficial to others. And it is with me unquestionable, that a Man may be what we call an *accurate Divine*, and yet not have the least Measure of Grace; such a one, of what Use soever he may be to others, for their Edification, he is of none to himself, by all he expresses. There are awful Words of our Lord's, *Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works?* They seem to flatter themselves, that their eminent Gifts, and the Exercise of them, would procure them an Admission into Heaven. Very awful indeed is the Answer they receive from Christ: *Depart from me, ye that work Iniquity* (Matthew 7:22,23). As Gifts and Grace are distinct Things, it is very necessary for those who are employed in public Work, to look as well to their Graces, as to their Gifts: Without this, a Minister, while he is improving in his Gifts, may, and will, I think,

*dwindle sadly* in his Graces. Other Acts are necessary, and Diligence of another Kind is needful to an Improvement in Grace and Holiness, than those which will serve to the Improvement of our Gifts. Having observed what Holiness is not: I go on to shew,

**2.** In a positive Sense, what it is: And it is to be considered as a Principle, and Acts flowing from that Principle.

(1.) True Holiness is a *new, spiritual* Principle or Spring of Action in the Mind. It is *new*, for which Reason, it is called a *new Heart*, and the Subject of it is laid to be a *new Creature*; *If any Man is in Christ, he is a new Creature: Old Things are passed away, behold, all Things are become new* (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is called new, in Opposition to the Flesh, or corrupt Habits of the Mind, and it is the very Reverse, and direct contrary of all that was in a Person before. Grace is not corrupt Nature mended, but it is a Disposition opposite and contrary to it. Flesh and Spirit are distinct Principles in the Mind, two Opposites in the same Person; *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*. The Flesh still remains what it was, and its Nature will never be changed. From these contrary Principles proceed contrary Acts, and there is a mutual Opposition between them; *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, there are contrary the one to the other* (Galatians 5:17). Again, this Principle may be called *new*, tho' not in Opposition to, yet in Distinction from, that original Righteousness, which Man possessed in a State of Innocency. There is an Agreement in their general Nature, as the one and the other are truly holy; but, in some Respects, there is a Difference between these two Principles: This latter was not due to Man by the Laws of Creation, and, therefore, as Men have it not in Fact, they never had it in Right; and God may communicate this Principle to whomsoever he pleases, upon the Foot of Sovereignty. The former was not a Life upon God, considered in a Mediator, nor was it, in its Nature, disposed and fitted to such a kind of Life; but this latter is such a Life, agreeable to the Nature of that new Covenant-relation, in which the Saints stand to God. Farther, it is a spiritual Principle; for this Reason it is called Spirit; *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*; and all the Acts which arise from it, are of a pure and spiritual Kind, and of the same Nature with itself. This Principle alone is the Spring of holy Actions in a Believer; none of his Acts are heavenly, but those which take their Rise from it; his Mind, or spiritual Part only, serves the Law of God. That is a Service into which the Flesh will never enter.

(2.) This Principle exerts itself various Ways, to the Glory of God who wrought it in the Soul, and to the Comfort and Advantage of those in whom it is, *viz.*

[1.] In believing; or in Acts of Faith on Jesus Christ. It discerns our Need of him, his Suitableness to our Condition; applies to him, and receives him, as he *of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption* (1 Corinthians 1:30); yea, as *our all in all* (Colossians 3:11): And this Faith purifies the Heart: *Putting no Difference between us and them, purifying their Hearts by Faith.* It influences unto a cheerful and holy Obedience, for which Reason it is called the *Obedience of Faith*, which is alone acceptable and pleasing unto God, thro' Christ, *For without Faith it is impossible to please him* (Hebrews 11:6); and we are no farther truly holy and spiritual in the Discharge of Duty, than Faith is acted therein.

[2.] This gracious Principle loves and delights in heavenly Things. In the Understanding, it is a Perception of their infinitely excellent and glorious Nature. In the Will, it is a closing with, and Adherence unto them. In the Affections, it is a Delight and Complacency in them, as pure, holy, and spiritual, and congruous to its own Nature; no Acts of which Kind can ever arise in an unsanctified Mind. A natural or unregenerate Person cannot know, nor relish and favour *the Things of the Spirit of God, to him they are Foolishness*, and, therefore, it is not possible that they should be the Objects of his Choice and Pleasure.

[3.] Grace hopes for better Things than it hath in present Possession. They are good Things it now enjoys, but they are far better which it hath in Right and Prospect. It is an humble Expectation of celestial Glory and consummate Happiness, in the immediate Presence of God and a dear Redeemer; on account of which, that glorious State bears the Name of Hope; *Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ* (Titus 2:13). The Christian, in the Exercise of Grace, *enters into that within the Vail whither the Fore-runner is for him entered* (Hebrews 6:19,20), and hath *his Conversation in Heaven*. Where he shall actually be, hereafter, there he now is, sometimes, in *Desire*, and in a way of *gracious Communion*.

[4.] This spiritual Principle exerts itself in a holy Reverence of God. It adores him on account of his infinite Perfections and Glory, in the religious Services which the happy Subject of it performs: *Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear* (Hebrews 12:28); And there is no true Reverence of God in a Mind destitute of this holy Principle, for from that alone it springs; and there is more or less of this Fear of the Divine Majesty, as this gracious Principle is more or less lively and vigorous.

[5.] Grace disposes the Mind to submit to the Will of God, in the various Dispensations of his Providence, whether prosperous or

adverse. It is an Acquiescence in his Pleasure concerning us, who knows what is best for us, and whole infinite Love to our Persons, will always so order every Occurrence, as to issue in our Advantage, if not as Men, yet as we are Christians; We know, that all Things work together for Good, to them who love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose (Romans 8:28). And,

[6.] This holy Principle is a Disposition to practice all the Branches of Righteousness in our Conversation in the World; Sobriety, Justice, Compassion, Benevolence, and whatever else Morality includes; *The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, and hath appeared to all Men, teaches the Saints to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.* True Grace in the Heart is a solicitous Care to maintain good Works in the Life. Farther,

[7.] The regenerate Part of a Believer casts a holy Contempt on the World, and all the most delectable Things in it. It is of a Nature far more sublime than the best of earthly Treasures, and it elevates the Mind towards, and fixes it on Objects infinitely more glorious than the gayest and most splendid Things, which please the Fancy, and attract the Affections of an unsanctified Person. This Heaven-born Principle aspires towards unseen and heavenly Objects. From Heaven it came, that is its proper Centre, and thither it tends. So far as our Affections are under its Influence, they are raised above sublunary Things, and placed on the noble Objects, which Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, constantly view with Wonder and Delight; *Seek those Things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of God. Set our Affections on Things above, not on the Things on the Earth* (Colossians 3:1,2). True Grace refuses the latter with a holy Disdain, because it is of a Nature far more noble and refined, than the most eligible of them all. Once more,

[8.] This Principle aims at the Glory of God in all its Acts. Real Grace is the most generous Principle in the World: Nay, I am bold to affirm, that there is no truly generous Principle in the World, but this gracious one: It is disinterested. Grace is not a selfish Thing; it seeks not its own Honour, but the Glory of the God of all Grace, from whom it is derived. Unless we design the Glory of God in our Acts of Obedience, there is nothing of true Holiness in what we do. It is not enough that the Matter of our Actions is good: Works truly good spring from Love in the Heart, are directed to the Glory of God, as their End, and are performed under the Influence of spiritual Considerations and Motives. We may pray, read the Word of God, attend on his Worship, and discharge the Duties of Civil Life in a blameless Manner, as to Men's Observation, and yet not have the least Degree of Grace. Whatever we think of ourselves, and what

Opinion soever others may have of us, we are no farther truly holy, than Grace is acted in our Obedience. If our Graces are not exercised in holy Duties, no Holiness attends them.

This Account of Holiness, I am sensible, would not be pleasing to many, who are professed Advocates for what, as it is usually called, practical Religion. I have sometimes thought, that it is a *little hard*, however, *it is unjust*, they are pleased to object to us, when we treat of the Doctrines of the Grace of God, that we have no Concern for Holiness and practical Religion: And when we discourse of *real* Holiness, they are disgusted, and say, that we are too *precise, strict,* and *rigid* in our Account of it. This is a sufficient Testimony, even from themselves, that they *abuse* us, when they say, that we have no Regard to practical Holiness, because we assert the Doctrines of Free Grace; they have forgot, as I suppose, what they object to us of this Kind, when they declare themselves to be displeased with our Account of Holiness, as too *strict and rigid*. But why are they dissatisfied with that Account? the Reason is, they thought themselves *rich, and increased with Goods, and had Need of nothing*: And, therefore, to be pronounced and proved Bankrupts and Beggars, very much displeases them. All their Gold, on which they valued themselves, if indeed our Explanation of Holiness agrees with Truth, they find that it is *mere Dross*. This gives them much Uneasiness, and is what they cannot bear with. As was before observed, Lust maintains its Rule in the Heart, even when it is checked by Conviction, under which there Persons are supposed to act. The Form of its Government in the Mind is altered, but its Dominion is not taken away, nor *the Extent* of it diminished. Holiness is indeed a great, yea, a most excellent Thing. I fear, that but little of it is found with many, who, yet, go on in a constant Course of religious Duties: And the best among us are very defective herein. Those who most study the Nature of Holiness, and keep the strictest Watch over their Hearts, will best discern their Defects and Imperfections, and be much stirred up to practise the great and necessary Duty here recommended, *viz.* Following after Holiness, which I proceed to consider,

***Thirdly, We ought to follow Holiness, i.e. in an earnest Manner we should endeavour after our Improvement therein.*** The original Word ( $\deltaιωκω$ ) is elsewhere rendered, I press (Philippians 3:14). It signifies a Fervency of Desire, and an Earnestness in Endeavour. If we are desirous of an Improvement in Grace, we must, in order to it, make it our *Scope* and *Aim*; not rest satisfied with our present Measure of Grace, but use a holy Diligence to increase it; without this, we cannot reasonably expect and hope for an Advancement in Holiness and Spirituality.

1. We must oppose, and *make no Provision for the Flesh*. So far as we gratify and feed the carnal Part in us, we prejudice our nobler Part. Grace is always a Sufferer by those Acts of the Mind, which spring from, and are pleasing to its opposite; for as Corruption and Grace are contrary Principles in the same Subject, whatever serves the Interest of the one, prejudices the other. If, therefore, we are not careful to deny the Flesh those Gratifications, which it is continually reeking after, we shall diminish the Vigour of the Spirit, and greatly interrupt its Exercise. Hence, we must, I think, be convinced of the Necessity of observing the Nature and Tendency of our Thoughts, whereby we may, without much Difficulty, form a true Judgment of their Origin; from what Spring of Action, in us, they take their Rise, whether from the Flesh, or from the Spirit. All vain Imaginations, all irregular Thoughts, all corrupt Motions of the Will and Affections, arise from the Flesh. Now, if we really design and desire an Improvement in Grace and Holiness, we must be observant of the Acts of our Souls, and oppose those which are vain and carnal; Negligence in this Matter, will issue in unspeakable Advantage to the Flesh, and necessarily end in great Damage to our spiritual Part, which it is our Wisdom, Interest, and Duty, to be solicitously careful of, that we no way prejudice it. The noxious Weeds of Corruption in our Hearts, cannot be nourished without Injury to the precious Seed of true Grace. *Worldly, selfish, ambitious, and covetous* Thoughts, when countenanced and cherished in the Mind, greatly hinder the Exercise of Grace, and assuredly prevent its Growth. There is great Reason to fear, that many, who go on in *a Round* of religious Duties, are not able to say, that they are much spiritual in those Duties, thro' the abounding of such kind of Thoughts in their Hearts; and yet there religious Performances give them Satisfaction at least, if they are not with them the Occasion of Self-Admiration and Applause. We shall never arrive to any *Emminency* in Holinesss, without much Self-Denial, and *a strict* Watch kept upon Lust, which hath numberless Ways of exerting itself, and a constant Opposition to it, in What Manner soever it acts its Part in us.

2. We must make it our *Scope* and *Aim*, in religious Exercises, to act our Graces, if we would improve in Holiness: Attendance to them is a necessary Branch of our Duty, and the Neglect of that Attendance is *inexcusable*; but a bare external Performance of those Exercises, will be of no Efficacy towards our Improvement in Grace. As there is no greater Degree of Holiness in our religious Services, than what consists in the Actings of the spiritual Principle in our Souls; so all our Advancement in Holiness in those Services, is from the Exercise of this holy Principle. Unless, therefore, we aim at performing Spiritual Duties, in *a spiritual Manner*, our Expectations

of gaining Advantage to our spiritual Part thereby, must be disappointed, because we have no Ground for such Expectations.

We ought to desire *the Sincere Milk of the Word*. The Grace of the Gospel *alone* is suited to feed and nourish our heavenly Part. The Doctrine of the Law acquaints us what Holiness is; but it is only the Grace of the Gospel which disposes us to the Practice of it. Let us not flatter ourselves with a Hope of increasing the Vigour of the gracious Principle in us, by any other Doctrine, than that of free Grace; for if we do, we shall certainly meet with a Disappointment. Because the Doctrine of Grace is that Food which God has provided and appointed for the Support and Nourishment of the Principle of Grace, and no other than what infinite Wisdom has provided for that Purpose, will ever, in the least Degree, (let some suggest what they please) serve to that important End. Real Holiness, and the Practice of true Religion, by sinful Men, can only be promoted by those Principles which are peculiar to the Gospel; the Reason is, that Holiness, and that Religion, is no other than the Exercise of *Grace* in the Hearts of Believers. the Strength and Vigour of which wholly arises from that Nourishment it receives, by digesting the glorious Truths of the Gospel. *Evangelical Obedience*, than which *no other* deserves the Name of Holiness, *nor is the Thing*, can only be promoted by Evangelical Doctrines. Indeed, a Disposition to a *merely moral Obedience* may be excited by Discourses of Morality and Virtue; but that is not Holiness, or a *Meetness* for future Blessedness, whereof I am to treat in the last Place.

***Fourthly, Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.*** Two Things must be attended unto, in this Branch of the subject, *viz. the Sight of God*, and, that no Man who is not the Subject of Holiness, shall have this happy Vision of him. In discoursing on the former, I would shew, what are the Properties of this View, and then the Objects, which are beheld with a Joy to us, at present inconceivable.

1. I begin with *the Properties of this Vision of God*. And they are such as must be exceedingly delightful to every one who truly desires to enjoy it. For,

(1.) It will be immediate, clear, and full. Here the Saints sometimes have spiritual Views of God by Faith, which fill them with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory: But these Prospects are far inferior to that View they will have of God in the heavenly State. They are attended with a double Disadvantage, at present, which renders it impossible to have the same View of God now, that they will enjoy hereafter. So long as they are in this State, they will be Subjects of Darkness, which incapacitates them to discern the Glory of heavenly Objects in a full and perfect Manner. They are Subjects of the Light

of Grace: *For, God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into their Hearts, to give them the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory in the Person of Christ* (2 Corinthians 4:6). But, then, they are also Subjects of Darkness, and, therefore, must be incapable of taking a complete View of spiritual Things. Besides, they only discern those Objects thro' a Medium at present. *Now we see thro' Glass darkly.* It is not an immediate View of those glorious Objects we now enjoy, but a Representation of them in the Glass of the Word: And this Representation of them is below their true Nature, for Language cannot fully express it. The Beauty and Glory of those bright Objects, Words can give us but an imperfect Image of. Since, in this State, we are attended with this double Disadvantage, our Prospects of heavenly Things, must be far inferior to that View we shall have of them in the blessed World When *we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known.* And, if the present imperfect View fills our Minds with inexpressible Delight, what Joy! what Pleasure! what Complacency must possess our Souls, when we shall have an *immediate, clear, and full* View of those inconceivably glorious Objects!

(2.) The Saints will enjoy an uninterrupted View of God hereafter. Their Prospects of him by Faith, in this State, are often interrupted by Unbelief, and numerous other Causes: But no Interruptions will take place in their future Views of their heavenly Father, thro' the Interposition of any Clouds. No Shades of Darkness will ever pass over them in the World above, which is all Light and Glory; nor will their Minds at all be diverted from beholding God and a dear Redeemer, by a Presentation of any other Objects, which now too frequently is the Case. This Consideration, added to the former, gives us a most delightful Idea of the heavenly State. I subjoin,

(3.) This Prospect will be endless. That State of Happiness is permanent, and will continue forever. *Here we have no continuing City; but we seek one to come, a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* The Saints *will ever be with the Lord, in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.* As their Existence will be eternal, so their Views of God will be without a Period. As no Change can possibly happen in the Nature of that blissful State, so it shall never have an End. If we consider the infinitely glorious Nature of the Objects seen; if we consider the Properties of this heavenly Vision, viz. that it is clear and full, that it is uninterrupted, and without End; surely we must conclude, that this State is most desirable, and perfectly blessed.

## 2. *This is a Vision, or Sight of God.*

**(1.)** We shall distinctly discern what each Person in the adorable Trinity hath acted, in order to our eternal Salvation and Happiness.

**[1.]** The kind Part the divine Father hath acted in our Favour. Our Election to everlasting Life, was his gracious Act. He *chose us in Christ before the Foundation of the World*; and this Choice of us, was unto perfect Holiness. The Contrivance of the Way of our Recovery from that Ruin brought on us by Sin, is his. He appointed Christ to be our Mediator, Head, and Surety, and decreed his taking upon him our Obligation to the Law. It was his sovereign Purpose, that he should bear our Guilt, and suffer that Penalty to which it rendered our Persons obnoxious, according to the *just Constitution* in the Law, and, thereby, satisfy its *equitable Demands*, and fully maintain the Rights of Justice, to whose terrible Resentment our Crimes exposed us. He gave all the invaluable Treasures of Grace and Glory into the Hand of Christ for us; and on the Foundation of his Atonement, he dispenses the Blessings of Grace to us in Time, and will communicate to us the Blessings of Glory in Eternity. *He will give Grace and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from us* (Psalm 84:11). Since he *spared not his own Son, age delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things?* If the imperfect Views we have at present of the stupendous Acts of the Father in our Favour, yield us inexpressible Pleasure, what transcendent Delight will be produced in our Minds, by the future Prospect of them?

**[2.]** We shall forever have in View the compassionate Part, which the eternal Son hath performed in our Favour. His undertaking for us, in the eternal Covenant transacted between the Father and himself, and the Holy Spirit. His Assumption of our Nature, *in the Fulness of Time*, coming under the Law to redeem us from it, agreeably to the fore-reign Purpose of the Father, and his own free Engagement. His Susception of our Guilt, and voluntary Submission to the Father's Pleasure, in *making his Soul an Offering for our Sins*, whereby he expiated our Guilt, *made Peace* for us, and secured our Persons from that *direful Vengeance*, which we, in Consequence of our Sins, were liable unto. Besides, he *brought in* for us an *everlasting Righteousness*, which justifies our Persons, and gives us an *unalienable Right* to eternal Life. And now he is in Heaven, it is his continual Employ to make Intercession for us, as a sympathizing and compassionate High Priest, under all our Difficulties, Temptations, and Sorrows, in this State of Imperfection, and Snares and Dangers. The imperfect View we have of these Things now, affords us the highest Pleasure; the clear, distinct, and endless Prospect of them hereafter, therefore, must possess our Souls with a Delight, that far surpasses our present Comprehension. For, since

ineffable Joy arises from those low and imperfect Views of heavenly Objects, which this State admits of; certainly unknown and inconceivable Delight will result from the clear and perfect, and uninterrupted Prospects of those Objects, in the happy World above.

[3.] We shall eternally behold what a gracious Part the blessed Spirit acts in our Favour, who inspires us with spiritual Life, when we are *dead in Trespasses and Sins*; infuses heavenly Light into our Souls, which are naturally Darkness; operates on us in a Way of spiritual Conviction; gives us a Sense of the Evil of Sin; shews us the exceeding Sinfulness of our Nature; presents us with a View of our inevitable Misery, as in ourselves considered; discovers to us the Ability and Suitableness of Christ, as a Saviour; encourages and assists us to make a humble Application to him for Life and Salvation; applies his Blood to our Souls, to ease us of the *pressing* Load of our Guilt, and heal the Wounds it gives us; shews us the Glory of his Righteousness, and enables us to lay hold on it, and embrace it, as the Matter of our Acceptance with God, our righteous Judge; open, to our View the Secrets of the Almighty, relating to the stupendous Design of our Recovery, and powerfully applies to us the *precious Promises* of his Word, whereby we are encouraged to hope in him, and draw near to him, as our gracious Covenant-Father, and in this Character to ark of him all that is needful to our Support, Guidance, and Consolation: He bears with all our Provocations, heals all our Backslidings, reduces our Souls when we go astray, revives the good Work under its Decays, and *restores to us the Joy of God's Salvation*, and establishes us afresh in the Ways of Holiness and Peace, and will continue so to do, until we arrive safe to the heavenly World, where we shall see the Wonders of his Love, in that perspicuous Manner the present State admits not of.

(2.) We shall enjoy a constant View of the divine Perfections, as they are exercised and displayed in our eternal Salvation. Everlasting, free and sovereign Love gave Rise to the Design, and runs thro' every Part of it: That is the Fountain from which all our Salvation, and the whole of our Happiness spring. Infinite Wisdom concerted the fit Methods of our Recovery, fate for us, and glorious to God. Who could ever have thought that Sin might be pardoned, and yet punished; that the Sinner might be saved, and yet Justice executed? This Contrivance is the highest Effect of the Wisdom of God, how much soever an *ignorant* and *proud* Generation of Men despise it as *Folly*. It is *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom, which he ordained before the World to our Glory*. Besides, in this Affair, the infinite Rectitude and Righteousness of God most evidently appear. His Love to our Persons is not more conspicuous, than his just Abhorrence of, and Indignation against our Sins, in this

Method he has took to pardon and save us. He appears to be just in justifying those who believe in Jesus, on the glorious Foundation of his Atonement and Satisfaction. This is saving us in a Way becoming himself; *It became him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect thro' Sufferings.* Again, the Truth and Faithfulness of God, shine most eminently in the Accomplishment of his Promises, relating to our everlasting Salvation and Happiness; and his absolute Immutability, on which our Security rests, is fully manifested. Much of the Glory of Heaven will consist in clear, distinct, and endless Views of the infinitely glorious Perfections of God, as exercised in our Redemption, and as they shine thro' the Person of the Mediator.

(3.) We shall always behold the Glory of Christ our dear Redeemer. He who was crowned with Thorns for our Sakes, we shall have the Satisfaction

of viewing seated on a Throne of Majesty, and crowned with Glory, and surrounded with the whole Number of the Elect of God, and Myriads of holy Angels, all uniting in joyful Songs of Praise to him for his redeeming Love to us miserable and worthless Creatures. For this he prays, and this he demands of the Father for us, which he has a Right to do; *Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me.*

(4.) We shall have a constant and full Perception of the Love of each divine Person to us, and of the infinite Delight Father, Son, and Spirit will eternally take in our complete Felicity. It is Matter of Joy to the divine Persons to do us Good now, and when the Design of our Salvation shall be completed, our Souls will have a ravishing Sense of that Pleasure, which arises to them from the Accomplishment of that gracious Design. The divine Persons *rejoice over us to do us Good*, as we are the Objects of their infinite Affection and Love. The Design of our Salvation was infinitely pleasing to the Father, Son, and Spirit; and the Accomplishment of that Design will be Matter of eternal Delight unto each of them. When we have once arrived to the heavenly World, we shall enjoy a perfect and constant Sense of that Pleasure which God takes in our Felicity, and that Sense must be productive of a most exquisite Joy.

The Knowledge which the Saints now have of heavenly Things, they shall never lose. All Gifts and Acquirements, on account of which Men are very apt to value themselves, will cease in that State, as there will be no need of their Exercise; but our spiritual Knowledge of spiritual Things shall then be fully ripened and brought to

Perfection; *We know in Part, and prophecy in Part, when that which is perfect is come, that which is in Part shall be done away.* The Objects are the same we now see by Faith, that we shall have an immediate, clear, full, and endless Prospect of in the World above; Glory, therefore, is Grace in its full Maturity, or our spiritual Knowledge of spiritual Things grown up to its intended Perfection. A most pleasing Thought this, and it is what may very justly be considered as a most persuasive Motive, diligently to study those sacred Truths. Who that considers this, and is acquainted with the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ, and of God, in and thro' him, wilt not be excited to use the *utmost* Diligence to increase and enlarge his Acquaintance with those sublime and heavenly Truths? If we really desire to possess future Glory, surely it must be a most eligible Thing, in our Esteem, to enjoy as much as we can, of that Satisfaction and Delight, which arise from a spiritual Perception of the Nature of those Objects, in the perfect Knowledge of which, will consist our complete Felicity, when with us Time shall have an End. Unless somewhat of this Kind is found in us, I know not of any Evidence we can possibly have of a Right unto, or of a Meetness in us for the Enjoyment of the blissful Vision of God. For, if we have no Inclination to be separate from the World, and all Things in it, in our Thoughts, Desires, and Affections, whilst here we dwell, what solid Foundation can we be supposed to have, to support a Hope, that the heavenly State is *really* desirable to us? None at all, as I think. If the *First-Fruits* are not valued and fought after, why should it be thought, that reaping the plentiful Harvest is *really* desired? Are we at great Pains to acquire Knowledge which will vanish, as useless, at Death, and shall we not labour to add to that Knowledge, which will never be lost; but ripen into Glory, when our Souls shall be dislodged of our mortal Bodies. And, if it be so, our Approbation of, and Delight in those Things, may be allowed as a good Evidence of our Meetness for the Enjoyment of this glorious State. On the other Hand, can we think, that those Persons are in the Way to Heaven, or desire to enjoy it, who discern no Excellency and Glory in there Things; but flight and despise them, as mere Foolishness? No surely; it is not Heaven they desire the Enjoyment of, but a mistaken Image which they have framed to themselves of that glorious State. An unregenerate Person neither knows what Heaven is, nor can desire it. That alone desires the Enjoyment of Heavenly Glory, which is a true Preparation for it, and is the real Commencement of it in the Soul, *viz.* that gracious, holy, and spiritual Principle which is implanted in a Person, at the Time of Regeneration, and is Regeneration itself. This leads me to observe,

***Lastly, That no Man, without Holiness, shall have this happy Sight of God.*** No Man whatever, let him be what he may, as to Descent,

Education, State Gifts, Usefulness to others, whether in the Civil or Religious Life, unless he partakes of Holiness in this, he shall not participate of Happiness in the next. As God designed all to become Subjects of Holiness in this World, whom he appointed to eternal Salvation; so holy Persons *only* are capable of that Glory, which consists in the Vision of him, Communion with him, and in a constant Adoration of him, which is maintained in the Mind by a Perception of his infinitely glorious Excellencies and Perfections; and, consequently, no Man, without Holiness, shall ever see the Lord.

Some, it may be, will be ready to fear, from the Consideration of what has been observed concerning the Nature of *real* Holiness, that they are not the subjects of it, and may say, if that Spirituality enters into the Nature of true Holiness, which you have expressed, I am afraid that, for my Part, I am a Stranger to it; I find, to my Sorrow, so much of the contrary of it in me. To such I would observe, that every Man in this World, who is the Subject of Holiness, he also is the Subject of Sin: Tho' every Man that is the Subject of Sin, is not the Subject: of Holiness; every one here, who is a subject of Holiness, is likewise a Subject of Sin: Do not, therefore, think, because you have Sin, that you have no Holiness. What is it in you, that prays, watches, and strives against Sin, as Sin? Is it the Flesh? No, that will never become an Opposer of itself. What is it in you that approves of the Law, as *holy, just, and good?* Is it corrupt Nature? No; that is *not subject to the Law, of God, nor ever will be;* these are Acts proper to a Principle of Holiness and Grace. The Flesh will still *serve the Law of Sin,* and you will be deceived if you think otherwise, for it is only the spiritual Part of a Believer that *serves the Law of God.* Hence, the *Apostle* resolves the contrary Actings of his Heart, into these two contrary Springs of Action in himself; *Flesh and Spirit, or Corruption and Grace:* *So then with my Mind, I myself serve the Law of God; but with the Flesh the Law of Sin.* The Being of Corruption in the Mind as an active Principle, engaged in the Service of the Law of Sin, is not to be considered as an Evidence, that there is not present in the Soul, a holy Principle, which is disposed unto, and engaged in the Service of the divine Law. It is the Dominion of Sin that is such an Evidence, and not the Presence of it, as an active Principle, always ready to exert itself in an Opposition to what is truly good, or of a spiritual Nature, and inclined to act what is evil. Regeneration neither takes away the Being of Sin, nor deprives it of a Power to act in Opposition to what is holy: And as Sin in the Regenerate does exert itself in Opposition to that which is holy, so it is a Disposition to do what is sinful. A Principle of Grace really takes away the Reign of Sin, but leaves it existent in the Mind, and changes not its Nature, it still is, and will always continue to be

what it was; Conviction doth not that: The Flesh, as has been observed, how much soever it is checked by Conviction, as to the Manner of exerting itself, it preserves its Rule entire: Tho' the Form of its Government is altered, it still maintains its Dominion in the Unregenerate. If, therefore, there is any Thing *at all* of this Spirituality and Subjection to the Law', in you, and Approbation of heavenly Things themselves, there is a Principle of Holiness in your Hearts, and you have proper Foundation for a *holy Confidence*, that *he who hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Christ.*

## SERMON 12

### ROMANS 3:31

“Do we then make void the Law thro’ Faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.”

### AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST A SPREADING ANTINOMIAN PRINCIPLE

ALL, who acknowledge that Man is a lapsed Creature, confess, that it is not possible to obtain Life, if a sinless and unerring Obedience to the Will of our Maker is required of us to that End.

But, *It is the Opinion of many, that Men are to acquire a Right to Life and Happiness, by yielding Obedience to a Law less rigorous in its Commands than the Law of Innocency is*, viz. the Gospel.

That is not, in the Apprehension of Multitudes, a gracious Discovery of a Right to impunity, and a Title to Life, by the Blood and Righteousness of Christ; but is only a Proposal of lower Terms of Life, by a Compliance with which we are to obtain for ourselves a Right to both. And these Terms are Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience.

This is the Opinion of the *Socinians*. This is also the Persuasion of the *Arminians*. And the *Baxterians assert* the fame. It is not the inseparable Connection of Faith and Salvation, which they intend; but *They maintain, that it is a proper Condition of Pardon and Salvation; and that Faith, with its Fruits, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness before God*, according to the Gospel; and

that That is it, from which our Right to eternal Blessedness results; that, as *Adam's* Right to a continual Enjoyment of Happiness would have arose from his Obedience to the old Law, so our Right to Life arises from our Obedience to this *new*, and (as it is call'd) *remedial* Law.

***I am fully persuaded, that this Opinion is not true:*** And I would, First, offer some Arguments to prove the Negative; Secondly, answer the Arguments for the Affirmative.

**First,** The Arguments against this Opinion are many.

**Arg. 1.** *If the Gospel is a Law by which Men are justified or condemned, it is very far from requiring a perfect Obedience in order to Acceptance.* It must be allowed, that the Commission of the *most atrocious* Crimes is no Objection to a Person's Justification in the fight of God by his own Works, *viz.* *Murder, Adultery, Incest, Cursing, Swearing, and a Denial of Jesus Christ, etc.*

For those, who embrace this Opinion, must be obliged to grant, that some Persons, who were guilty of the Crimes mentioned, were, notwithstanding, justified in the fight of God by their own Works; and, consequently, this Law is far indeed from being a perfect one. If it is laid, that God forbids all Evil, and requires all Good, in Practice, by this Law, then it will follow, that he justifies Men, or accounts them righteous, in relation to their own Actions, whose Conduct hath not been, such as his Law requires it should be; which looks very much like a Contradiction. If God reckons a Man righteous on the ground of his Behaviour, how can he esteem him a Sinner under that Consideration? Are there Things consistent? Who can imagine they are? Is one Sort of Righteousness commanded in point of Duty? And is another, very different from it, the Matter of our Justification? Then, surely we are justified, without yielding such Obedience as the Law requires of us. It seems to me, that no Action can be accounted criminal, which is not preventive of our Justification, by our own Works, according to that Law, whereby we are to be tried. And, therefore, this is such a Law as I heartily disapprove of, and cannot but reject with some degree of Indignation as inconsistent with the Holiness of God. It so falls out, that some Persons, who clamour most against *Antinomianism*, slide (it may be insensibly) into *Antinomian* Principles. This is certainly such; for it vacates the Moral Law in its Sanction, and makes no Sin *damnable*, but final Unbelief.

**Arg. 2.** *God cannot be the Author of an imperfect Law.* His Nature is infinitely holy, and he necessarily, tho' freely, wills what is perfectly pure and holy. His Law is the Expression of his Will, respecting the Conduct of his Creatures towards himself, and one another. Love to

him, and Love to our Neighbour, is the Sum of our Duty. And it is absurd to think, that God requires of Men a less Affection to himself and to one another, than heretofore he did. Nor is it less absurd to suppose, that God justifies Men for a *partial* Obedience to a perfect Law; because then his Judgment concerning them cannot be according to Truth and Fact. If a Subject offends against the Law in any Point, he is a Transgressor in fact, and must be so accounted; and, consequently, he cannot be reckoned righteous on the score of his Behaviour.

**Arg. 3.** *Men cannot act any thing good and pleasing to God; and, therefore, they are not meet Subjects of a Law in order to Acceptance by the Observation of it.* In this Argument I do not insist on a perfect Performance of Duty. I only intend Faith, Repentance, and an holy Obedience. And I utterly deny, that Men, without the Grace of Regeneration, can believe, repent, turn to God, and yield an holy and acceptable Obedience to him. They are not attended with, *a Deliquium of Spirits*; but they are dead; and, therefore, no Influences, which convey not Life to them, will ever enable them to act. Their Hearts are Stone, and not susceptible of spiritual Impressions.

The unregenerate Mind is Enmity against God; and it is impossible to cause it to love God, and become subject to his Law. Every regenerate Person hath within himself sad and full Evidence of the Truth of this. That which constantly lusteth against the Spirit, by reason of the Contrariety of its Nature, by no Influence whatever can be brought to act as the Spirit does even in spiritual Persons; much less is this possible in Minds wholly carnal. Until, therefore, it is proved, that Grace, as a Principle, is not necessarily prerequisite to gracious, spiritual Acts, (which yet has not been done, and I am bold to say never will be) it must be concluded, that Men are not meet Subjects of a Law, requiring Faith; Repentance, and holy Obedience, as Conditions of Justification and everlasting Salvation, If this is the Facet, nothing is more certain than their eternal Ruin. The Reason is, no Helps and Influences: which, do not communicate a gracious Principle, will ever be effectual to the Production of spiritual Acts in Men, whether Elect, or Non-elect; and, consequently, the Salvation of no Man is possible, according to this Scheme. *Baxterians*, indeed, assert the Certainty of the Salvation of the Elect; but, as they allow not of the Infusion of gracious Habits, they leave even the Elect in a State of certain Damnation. Men may talk, while they please, about Grace sufficient as afforded to all, and of Grace effectual being given to some; but, if Grace doth not really produce a new Principle of Action, it is sufficient for no Man, nor will ever be effectual in any Man. They who are in the Flesh, *i.e.* in an unregenerate State, cannot

please God. No Assistance can enable them so to do. Nor can the natural Man be enabled to know the Things of the Spirit of God. He may by divine Grace be made a spiritual Man; but no Influence upon him, while he is a *natural* Man, will render him capable of understanding spiritual Things. A Man that is blind may have a visive Power given him; but he cannot be made to see without such a Power. And a Man who is dead may be inspired with a Principle of Life; but it is impossible by any Operation upon him to cause him to act while he is dead. Omnipotence can give Being to Intelligence where it is not; but infinite Power cannot produce reasonable Acts, without a rational Nature, for that implies a Contradiction. And God can, and of his sovereign Mercy he doth, produce a Principle of Love in Minds which are Enmity against him; but he cannot cause Enmity to love him, and delight in his Law.

**Arg. 4.** *God is the Author of all that is good and pleasing to him in Men; and, therefore, the Gospel cannot be a Law.*

Spiritual Life is from him, which capacitates for spiritual Action: *You hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins.* He is the Origin of heavenly Light, whereby we become capable of discerning the Nature of heavenly Things: *God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts to give the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory, in the Face, or Person* (*Προσωπω*) *of Christ.* And he creates us in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Faith and Repentance are his Gifts, not acquired with his Help. Faith, as a Habit or Principle, doth not arise from Acts of believing; but the Grace of Faith is given, and believing Acts follow upon it. A Man does not first act, and then live; but, on the contrary, he first lives, and then acts. A Person does not discern Objects, and upon that become the Subject of a visive Power; but he first hath that Power, and then sees the Objects that are before him. And a Man does not first repent and act holily, and then his Heart becomes Flesh, *i.e.* soft, and susceptible of good Impressions; but, on the contrary, God gives him an Heart of Flesh, whereupon he repents, and receives good Impressions, and acts in a holy and acceptable Manner.

From hence it is evident, that the Gospel cannot be a Law, wherein a Provision is made for the Salvation of all who hear it; because God doth not give Life to some, because he doth not communicate Light to some, because he doth not give Faith and Repentance to some, nor create them in Christ Jesus unto good Works, without which the Salvation of any Man is impossible; for all Men naturally are dead, blind, their Hearts are Stone, devoid of a holy Principle, and are averse to Good. To say, that the metaphorical Expressions used in Scripture, whereby the deplorable Condition of Men is represented,

are not to be understood in a *strict*, but *qualified* Sense, and that it is not to be thought, that Men are in fact *dead* and *blind* in a spiritual Sense, is in effect to assert, that the holy Spirit expresses his Intention in a very *improper* Manner, in a Way which naturally tends to deceive us, and to lead us into false Conclusions, concerning a Subject, which to us is of the last Importance, of the Truth of which we shall never be persuaded: Especially, since our own Experience fully convinces us of the Justness of that Representation of our natural Condition. If good Men would but be determined in their Sentiments about the dreadful Corruption of our Nature, by what they find within themselves of Blindness, Hardness of Heart, Aversation from God and Holiness, and of a Propension to Evil, all Contention with them would cease concerning the Ability of Mankind with common Helps to act a Part holy and acceptable to God.

In short, if the Gospel is a Law, which enjoins on us Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience, as Conditions of obtaining Life and Happiness, and our Nature is left to act, as it can, with Aids, Assurances, Excitations, and Impulses upon it, without a divine Influence effectual to the Production of spiritual Life and a Principle of Holiness in our Hearts, our eternal Ruin is inevitable; and, therefore, this is falsely called a *remedial* Law, for, according to it, our Misery is *certain* and *remediless*. This Scheme is only calculated to nourish Pride in the Flesh, and to lay the Spirit in Believers under the greater Discouragement, let Men flourish upon it as much as they will.

**Arg. 5.** *The Gospel cannot be a Law, because that would enervate the Satisfaction of Christ.* The *Socinians* know this perfectly well; but with them it is no Objection, for they wholly deny that Doctrine. The *Arminians* and *Baxterians* are in some measure affected by it, because they both grant the Truth of Christ's suffering in the Room and Stead of Sinners, tho' neither allow his Satisfaction to be full, proper, and plenary. They insistupon it, that what Christ paid for our Redemption was not the same with what is in the Obligation; and that, therefore, his dolorous Sufferings were not a proper Payment of our Debt; and, consequently, a proper and full Satisfaction for our Sins could not arise from his Death to the Law and Justice of God: And from hence, they, conclude, that Right to Impunity is not obtained by the Sacrifice of Christ; but that, the Death of Christ notwithstanding, God may and doth enjoin Conditions on Men, and require the Performance of them, in order to Pardon and Justification, *viz.* Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience. The *Baxterians* suppose, that effectual Grace is given to the Elect to enable them to perform those Conditions, (herein they differ from the *Arminians*) and that

sufficient Grace is afforded to the Non-elect, and, therefore, they are put into *a salvable State*; but that their Salvation, tho' possible, is not certain, which they think the Salvation of the Elect is.

I would here first take notice of a great Mistake, which lies at the Bottom of this Manner of Rating the Doctrine of Satisfaction, *viz.* It is taken for granted, that it is just to require an innocent Person to suffer corporal Punishment for Delinquents, and their Impunity notwithstanding remain uncertain; and, if not secured by the Performance of some Conditions enjoined on them, then Punishment may be inflicted on them, tho' an innocent Person hath suffered in their Room and Stead. Such a Procedure may take place in pecuniary Punishments, but not in corporal; because the suffering Party in that Case would be really injured.

In pecuniary Punishments it is otherwise; because Money paid may be returned, (and in Right it ought to be) if the Delinquent is not actually released. In corporal Punishments this cannot be; and, therefore, the suffering Person sustains Injury, if the Delinquent, in whole Stead he endured bodily Pains and Penalties, is punished for those Crimes, on account of which he suffered. This is said on a Supposition of an innocent Person's suffering for a Criminal, tho' it is not lawful for Men to require it. Hence it is evident, that our Freedom from the Obligation is not an *uncertain* and *precarious* Matter, if only what *Civilians* call *Acceptilation* is found in this Transaction of the Death of Christ for Sinners: But clear it is, that his Sufferings were a *Solution*, or *proper Payment*, from whence *real* Satisfaction arises to the Law and Justice of God for our whole Guilt.

1. All our Sins were imputed to him on the Part of God, our righteous Judge; and Christ on his Part took them all upon himself. His Susception of our Guilt was his Submission to the Will of the Father, that he should bear it for us. *He was made Sin for us, who knew no Sin. And the Lord laid on him the Iniquity or us all.*
2. He was made a Curse. That which we are freed from, in consequence of his Death, he was made, which is the Law's Curse; and, therefore, his Punishment was that which the Law threatened, and unto which we were obnoxious.
3. Christ endured a painful Sensation of God's Displeasure against Sin.
4. An infinite Value attended his Sufferings, arising from the infinite Dignity of his Person.

Mr. Baxter often observes in his Writings, that Christ did not suffer the *Idem*, i.e. the same that was due to us, because the Law requires the Transgressor to suffer; but this was no more than a Commutation of Persons, and not a Change of the Nature of the Punishment. This is also contended frequently for; because the Law threatened eternal Death, and the Sufferings of Christ were but short, and, therefore, not the same unto which we were liable. But this infers no Change in the Nature of the Punishment: It don't follow, that it was not the same in Kind, because it was short in Duration. His Sufferings were satisfactory, and, therefore, they ended; ours are not satisfactory, therefore they are continued. Again, it is urged, that Christ did not suffer Desperation; and, therefore, his Sufferings were not the same with ours.

*Answ.* Sufferings that are satisfactory can't be attended with Desperation; but Sufferings that are not satisfactory must be attended therewith, by reason of their Perpetuity, because not satisfactory. And it is not merely from the Nature of the Sufferings of Christ, that they became satisfactory; but from the Dignity of his Person: Nor is it from the Nature of our Sufferings, that they are not satisfactory; but from the Want of Value in them, thro' the Meanness of our Persons. To deny, that the Sufferings of Christ were in Kind, that Penalty which our Sins demerited, enervates his Satisfaction, obscures the Glory of divine Justice in our Remission, and it infinitely detracts from the Honour of the Grace of God; but this must be denied, in order to support the Opinion of a conditional Scheme of Salvation.

Three Things are observable in this Affair.

1. It became God to act thus in bringing many Sons to Glory. The wonderful Procedure was condescendent and agreeable to his Perfections.
2. It is honourable to his Law. That is greatly magnified and exalted. Far greater Honour is done to the Law by our Saviour's enduring the Curse, than could ever be, by our suffering what it threatens.
3. It is just to forgive Sin on the Foundation of Christ's Sufferings and Death. The Justice of our Remission springs not from our Faith, Repentance, and Obedience; but from the Merit of the Sacrifice of Christ. God could not but make Provision for the Satisfaction of his Law and Justice in the Business of our Salvation, by reason of the Righteousness of his Nature; and, since Satisfaction is given to both by the Death of his Son, he cannot but pardon and save all those for whose Sins Satisfaction is made; because contrary Acts cannot agree to Justice, viz. to pardon and punish. If it is just to forgive Sins for which Christ suffered, it cannot be just to punish for those Offences.

The Opinion of the Gospel being a Law requiring Obedience as a Condition of Pardon, and for Want of it adjudging Men to endless Misery, overthrows the Satisfaction of Christ, and can never consist with the Righteousness of God, which is only displayed in pardoning of Sin on that Ground, and not in the Infliction of Punishment on Transgressors.

According to this Scheme, God punishes Sin *twice*, once in the Sinner's Surety, and also in the Sinner himself; which Justice can never direct unto.

Right to Impunity *immediately* takes Place upon Satisfaction being made; and, therefore, Conditions cannot be enjoined on Sinners for whom Christ died, which will render their Impunity *precarious*.

The Death of our Saviour is, in itself, effectual to these great Ends, entirely without the Existence of any good Dispositions in us, *viz.*

**1.** The Expiation of Sin. His *Blood cleanseth from all Sin*: He *purged our Sins*, and *put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself*: He *finished Transgression, and made an end of Sin*. As he *bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*, he bore them away from us: So that no Charge can be brought against us, as we are interested in his Death. Hence is that Challenge of the Apostle: *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died.*

**2.** Freedom from Condemnation. We are redeemed from the Curse of the Law: And *there is no Condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus.*

**3.** Security from penal Suffering. Reconciliation is made. *Peace is made by the Blood of the Cross of Christ* and Salvation from Wrath follows Pardon thro' his Blood. Faith is the Evidence of our Title to Pardon; but the Sacrifice of Christ gave Being to our Right to Impunity.

**Arg. 6.** *Grace, in its Principle, and Acts, is absolutely promised; and, therefore, it cannot come under the Notion of a proper Condition of Life.* That it is necessarily prerequisite, as a Meetness for Heaven, is a most certain Truth; for an unsanctified Mind is wholly indisposed to heavenly Communion, the Viewing of heavenly Objects, and unto heavenly Service; and, consequently, it is impossible, that an unregenerate Person should enjoy the heavenly State. This being affirmed, all just Occasion is entirely cut off for *Cavilling and Reproach*, which sometimes even good Men, thro' their present *Imperfection*, are too forward to load Principles with,

which, they do not think meet to admit into their Creed. Grace, as a Principle, is Matter of absolute Promise. *I will take away, the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh: I will put my Law in their inward Parts; I will write it in their Hearts.* And the Exercise of that gracious Principle in holy Obedience is also absolutely promised. *I will cause you to walk in my Statutes; and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them.* Which precious Promises ascertain the Communication of Holiness, as a Principle, and the Exercise of that Principle in a holy, acceptable Obedience, to all those unto whom those Promises relate; and, therefore, Duties included, in that Obedience cannot be *proper* Conditions of Life and Happiness: Hence it undeniably follows, that the Gospel is not a Law.

Some say, that, *tho'* these Promises are absolutely expressed, yet a Condition is supposed, or implied; and that, therefore, the Duties included in those Promises, are Conditions of obtaining Blessedness. But what Reason have Men to imagine, that a Meaning so very different from the natural Import of the Language of Scripture is intended? None at all; only a false Apprehension of the Power of depraved Nature to do, what it has neither Ability nor Inclination to act, nor can possibly be influenced unto by any Aids and Assurances whatsoever; and a mistaken Notion concerning the Grace of God, which is wholly free, and is the efficient Cause of *all* in Men that is good and pleasing to him. Again, I desire to know what it is, that is required of Men as a Condition of receiving Grace from God: If it be any Acts of Holiness, they can never arise from the corrupt Hearts of Men; for without the Grace of Faith it is impossible to please God. Until, therefore, that Grace is wrought in a Man, he is absolutely incapable of acting any thing that will find Acceptance with his Maker. In short, this Way of reasoning sup-poses, that, if Men will believe, repent, and turn to God, then he will make them Believers; which how absurd it is, I think, that it is not difficult for any Person to conceive.

**Arg. 7.** *To suppose, that the Gospel is a Law, destroys the Opposition, which the Scripture puts between the Law and Gospel, or between Works and Grace, in the Business of our Justification and Salvation.* The Holy Spirit, who foresaw the numerous Ways that Men would take to establish the Doctrine of Justification by Works, hath so expressed himself on this Subject, as to meet with all their subtle and surprizing Arguments and Evasions, in what manner soever they express themselves. If they say, that Justification is not by perfect Works, true, it cannot, for Righteousness is imputed without Works. If they say, that it is not of Works meritorious, that is certain;

because it is not of Works. If they say, that Justification is not by ritual Works, it is right; for it is not of Works. If they say, that it is not of Works Wrought before Faith, it is true; for Justification is not of Works. The *Apostle* does not exclude from Justification in the light of God this or that Kind of Works, in Distinction from others; but Works, by what Names soever Men shall like to call them, *viz.* *Dispositions, Qualifications, Conditions, sincere Obedience*, or whatever else you can imagine. And, therefore, to assert, that we are justified by the Performance of any Duties, is directly to contradict the *Apostle*, who affirms, that *Righteousness is imputed without Works*: For, if our Justification before God is by our personal Obedience to his Commands, a Righteousness without Works is not imputed to us for Justification in his sight. Besides, Grace excludes Works, as Causes and Conditions of Salvation. *By Grace are we saved*: And, *if it be of Grace, then it is no more of Works*, without all Distinction, as was before argued. Hence we conclude, that the Gospel is not a Law promising Life on condition of Obedience; for, if it is, we are to be saved by our own Works. The Righteousness and Blood of Christ have procured for us *only a conditional Grant* of Life and Salvation: Our Title to future Blessedness results not from what he hath done and suffered for us; but it is to arise from what we ourselves do. Than which nothing is more false.

Mr. *Baxter* often speaks of our Righteousness, as *subordinate* to the Righteousness of Christ; but how can that be deemed a subordinate Righteousness, which gives right to Life?

That is a greater Benefit than the conditional Grant of Life: The Righteousness of Christ obtained only the latter for us, our own Righteousness secures the former. And, therefore, according to him, greater Advantage accrues to us from our own Obedience, than springs from the Righteousness of Christ: That is, if an actual Right to Life is a greater Benefit than merely a conditional Grant of it is; whereof, I think, that no Man will ever doubt.

**Arg. 8.** *If the Gospel is a Law, Boasting is not excluded; and, therefore, it is not such.* That all Boasting, or Glorying in ourselves, as we are the Subjects of Salvation, is entirely cut off by that Method, which God hath took to save us, is as clear in Scripture, as if it was written with a Sun-beam. It may not be improper to observe, that, when Boasting is laid to be excluded, it is spoken of Men, as Creatures fallen, guilty and corrupt; and, therefore, it is necessarily supposed, that Remission takes Place in them: And, consequently, by Boasting is not intended any Pretence of a perfect Compliance with our Duty, so that according to strict Justice we are not liable to Misery, but, on the contrary, are intitled to the Reward promised on

that Condition. Let us now consider, what Kind of Boasting may be supposed in Creatures, who cannot lay claim to Favour on the Foundation of strict Justice. And, 1. We may suppose, that Men have been so far obedient to some Law, as gives them a Right to Life. 2. That this Obedience, tho' it was facilitated by Helps afforded, yet it was not wholly owing to a divine Influence upon them; but was the Result of a wise Improvement of such Advantages, as in Kindness were granted unto them. It is easy to see, that, if the Gospel is a Law, Foundation is laid for both these Things, *viz.* pleading a Right to Life by Works, and acting a wise and prudent Part: As thus, *Peter* and *Judas* are Subjects of the same Law; that is to say, the fame *condescending* Terms of Life are proposed to each; and each hath such Helps afforded, as render the Performance of those Terms possible. *Judas* is so unwise as to neglect his own Interest, when, with the Advantages granted to him, he hath an Opportunity of *making himself for ever*: On the contrary, *Peter* is so prudent as to consult his own Welfare, and wisely improves the Advantages which are granted to him, and so secures his Happiness. This is all that can be included in Boasting, when the Reward is not due upon the Foundation of strict and rigorous Justice.

*And, such* Boasting there is Ground for in those who are saved, if the Gospel is a Law; especially, if it is denied, that the Infusion of a gracious Principle is prerequisite to Acts of acceptable Obedience; which Mr. *Baxter* did deny: And that Denial is necessary to support his Opinion of the Possibility of obtaining Life by this *new* and *remedial* Law; which the late *Dr. Watts* did not seem to be apprehensive of, and, therefore, granted it, to the utter Overthrow of what he endeavoured to maintain concerning a conditional Provision of Salvation, for the Non-elect.

According to this Scheme, the subjects of Salvation may affirm two Things concerning themselves, 1. That their actual Right to Life is the proper Result of their own Obedience. 2. That this Obedience of theirs, tho' facilitated by the Grace of God, was not wholly owing unto that as the Cause thereof; but in part it was the Effect of their own Prudence, and Care, wisely to improve those Advantages afforded unto them; while some others have foolishly neglected so to do, and, therefore, failed of acquiring that Right to Blessedness, which they, by acting a wiser Part, have obtained for themselves. Hence it is apparent, that Heaven is not the Gift of God's good Pleasure to those who enjoy it but a Prize won by their own Care and Industry, not indeed by Obedience to the Law of Innocence; but by the Observance of a Law of *milder* Terms, which God condescended to give, when he might have insisted on a sinless

Obedience. The Constitution of this *milder* Law was an Act of Favour; but the Enjoyment of the Blessings it promises is Matter of *due Debt*, its Terms being fulfilled; because the Constitution of this Law gives no Title or Claim to the Reward, that results from the Subject's Obedience to it. And, therefore, as the Apostle asserts, *Boasting is not excluded by a Law of Works.* Again, it is evident, according to this Scheme, that Men may have it to lay, that what they have done in Obedience to this Law was not intirely owing to the Efficiency of divine Grace; because their Obedience sprang not from a supernatural Principle communicated unto them of God, but was performed by their natural Powers, *as aided only* by the Grace of God. If we could once persuade Men to believe the absolute Necessity of the Infusion of a new Principle in order to perform Acts of Duty in an acceptable manner, we should hear no more of this *conditional* Scheme of Salvation; that is, if they will not embrace Inconsistencies: For Salvation cannot be conditional, if what is required of Men in order to it, is the sole and intire Work of God upon them. The Reason of it is evident; that cannot be a *proper* Condition of enjoying a Benefit, which is absolutely given, and wrought in the Subject of it, by him who bestows that Benefit: If you assert this, you explain away the Nature of a *proper* Condition. This is certainly the Care with respect to Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience; for *God worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure.* If it is not thus, Boasting is not excluded in the Opinion of the *Apostle*, who infers that Exclusion from God's creating us in *Christ Jesus* unto good Works.

And, therefore, we conclude upon it, that this *new Law-Scheme* is of Men's devising, and that the Salvation of none is a possible thing according to that Scheme; because It is supposed, that Faith is not infused, but acquired with divine Help, which it can never be; for Acts of Grace cannot spring up in a Mind destitute of a gracious Principle. A dead Man cannot be assisted to act; he may be made alive, and then act; but no Influence upon him, which conveys not Life, will ever be productive of Actions in him. This Scheme, therefore, however plausible it may seem to some, leaves even all Mankind, Elect and Non-elect, in a State of *remediless* Woe and Misery; and the Reason why, none will have ground of boasting is, if this Scheme is true, no Man will be saved.

**Arg. 9.** *The Experience and Acting of Grace in the Souls of Believers, are inconsistent with the Notion of the Gospel being a Law, or Covenant of Works.*

It is supposed, that our own Obedience, according to this *new* and *remedial* Law, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness before

God. If in Fact it is so, then surely it might be expected, that the Saints would plead their Obedience for the Acceptation of their Persons with God, or as the Ground of their Hope of standing in Judgment. Let us, therefore, briefly consider, what some eminent Saints have expressed concerning themselves, and their Obedience; and, whether their Language will allow us to think, that they expected to be justified in the sight of God by virtue of what they had done. I begin with Job, who had not his *Equal* in Holiness at the time he liv'd. He says thus, when impressed deeply with a Sense of the Greatness and Majesty of God: *Whom, tho' I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make Supplication to my Judge. If I justify myself, mine own Mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse; If I wash myself with Snow-water, and make my Hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the Ditch, and mine own Cloaths shall abhor me.* Elsewhere says he, *I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes.* This does not seem to be the Language of a Man who expected to be justified by his own Obedience.

*David*, a Man *after God's own Heart*, deserves well to be consulted on this Subject. And it is observable, that he was so far from esteeming his own Righteousness as a sufficient Plea for Justification at the divine Tribunal, that he prays he might not be tried at the Bar of God on that Foundation; and at the same time (if I mistake him not) asserts, that no Man will be justified in the sight of his own Works. *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant: For in thy sight shall no Man living be justified.* He, therefore, had no Expectation of being accepted, with God by virtue of his own Obedience. And *Isaiah* humbly confessed, that he was a *Man of unclean Lips*. *Daniel* at large acknowledges his Iniquity, and disclaims all Title to divine Favour, on the ground of his own Works. The Church declares herself to be *as an unclean Thing, and that all her Righteousness were as filthy Rags.* The *Apostle Paul*, who had as much to say of his Piety, Zeal, Diligence, and Sufferings, for the sake of the Gospel, as any Man ever had, is far from letting us an Example of Dependence on our own Obedience; for his Part, he desired *not to have his own Righteousness*. Inherent Holiness, and the good Works springing from it, were his own; for what a Man is the Subject of, and acts, is his own: He, therefore, rejected all his Works of Piety in the Business of Justification before God. If any Man will shew me, that one Saint in the Scripture ever looked for Acceptation with God, and the Enjoyment of future Blessedness, on the Foundation of his own Obedience, I promise to embrace immediately this *new Law-Scheme*, tho' I know it will be a *Renunciation of the Gospel in some of its*

*fundamental Truths.* But there is not the least Danger of my being obliged unto this; for the gracious Experience of good Men, is *never counter to evangelical Truth*. And therefore, I declare, that I had much rather be determined in my Sentiments of the great Doctrine of a poor Sinner's Justification in the sight of God, by the Thoughts of the *plainest Christian* on this subject, than by what are esteemed *the most exact and accurate Disputations of the most learned Men on that Point*. And I am satisfied, that, if Men of Learning, who were also holy and gracious, had but attended to their own spiritual Experience in writing on the Doctrine of Justification, they would never have given Disturbance to the Church of God by advancing anti-evangelical Notions relating to that Doctrine; which is what too many have done; or given too much Countenance unto, in the Manner of their treating upon it.

It is one Thing to have to do with Men, in a way of Dispute about Acceptance with God, and another to have our Minds impressed with a Sense of the Solemnity of an Appearance before the divine Tribunal: Without the latter we may be able to object and wrangle, and frame numerous Evasions to elude the Force of Truth, and to spin out of our own Brain many *Cobweb Arguments* to countenance Error: But, when we are in our Apprehensions placed at the Bar of God, and we have a Prospect of our Guilt, Impurity, Imperfection in all Graces and Duties; when we see the Majesty, Purity, and Omnipotence of God, our righteous Judge; other Thoughts immediately arise in our Minds concerning the Consequence of our Trial at his Judgment-Seat on the Foundation of our own Actions, than our Minds entertain without this View, and Consideration of our Condition, in spite of all the *subtle and new-fangled Divinity*, where-with disputing Men may labour to furnish us, for our Encouragement and Support in so awful a Season. All *quaint Distinctions, all vain Objections* against divine Truth, all *plausible Arguments* in Defence of Error, on this solemn Subject, vanish, and leave us in a hopeless State. Nothing then, but the Blood and Righteousness of Christ, can ingenerate in our poor Souls the least Expectation of Pardon, Peace, and Acceptation with our tremendous Judge. We tremble at the Thought of appearing before God in our own Figleaf Righteousness; and the Language of our Hearts is: *May I be found in Christ, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but the Righteousness of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.*

**Arg. 10.** *If the Gospel is a Law, or conditional Scheme of Salvation, it cannot furnish any Believer with an Assurance of enjoying Happiness.*

That Assurance of Salvation is not essential to Faith, I have lately assigned some Reasons for: But to assert, that there is not proper and sufficient Foundation for it in the Souls of the Saints, is to *overthrow the whole Gospel*, as might with much Ease be abundantly manifested: And, that it is a Favour which many of them have enjoy'd, is as evident from Scripture, as it is, that there were in the World such Persons as Believers. And, consequently, that Scheme must be false, according to which Assurance of Salvation cannot be enjoyed. Nothing is more clear, than that no Man can be assured of final Happiness, by the Gospel of Christ, if it is a *conditional* Scheme of Salvation; because that Assurance cannot exist, until the Condition on which Salvation depends is fulfilled: Now, that Condition is Perseverance in Faith and Holiness: And, therefore; a Person cannot know that he shall arrive to Heaven, until he finds himself in that happy State. *Baxterians*, indeed, say, that the Elect shall persevere and be saved: But, according to this Scheme, no Believer can possibly know from the Word of God, that he is elected; for it supposes, that the Non-elect may believe, repent, and turn unto God: And, of course, Holiness cannot evidence to any Man his Election of God. The Reason is plain: Sanctification is not *proper* to the Elect. How well soever, therefore, *Paul* is satisfied of the Truth of his Faith, and of the Reality of his Holiness, it is impossible that he should be able to collect from thence the Certainty of his eternal Salvation, because a non-elect Person may have true Holiness, but fail of Perseverance therein, and be eternally damned; of which Number notwithstanding all his Exultation and Triumph, he may be, for ought he can possibly learn from the Gospel of Christ. Hence it is most clear, that this *new Law-Scheme* is no proper Ground of that strong Consolation, which God is abundantly willing that the Heirs of Promise should enjoy: And, therefore, with some Degree of Boldness, I dare pronounce, that it is utterly false, and no Gospel of Christ. Blessed be God for that gracious and abundant Provision which he hath made for our *everlasting Consolation and good Hope, thro' Grace*, in the Gospel of his Son: Let us prize it, and never be so ungrateful to him, and so much wanting to ourselves, as to embrace a Scheme for Truth, which must: necessarily deprive us thereof, and leave us unavoidably at great Uncertainties in relation to the Salvation of our precious and immortal Souls, what Degrees of Holiness soever we may know ourselves to be the Subjects of now: For it seems, some true Believers may apostatize and perish for ever; and we have no possible Way of knowing that we are not of that Number.

**Arg. 11.** *Divine Love secures Salvation to all its Objects: And, therefore, those who perish were never interested in the Love of God;*

*consequently, the Gospel cannot be a conditional Scheme of Salvation.*

That divine Love secures Salvation to all its Objects, fully appears from its Nature and Effects. 1. The Nature and Properties of the Love of God is a solid Foundation of the eternal Security of all those on whom it is fixed; for it is *immense*, *immutable*, and *inseparable*. And what Blessings may not be expected to flow from infinite Goodness and Favour? What greater Security can be desired, than springs from Love, which is not only capable of conferring *all* that is necessary to the Happiness of its Objects (which infinite Love must be), but is also absolutely above all Possibility of *Abatement*, *Change*, and *Separation* from the Persons interested therein?

Love in God is not a *Passion*; but it is his holy, sovereign Will to do good to Men, or make them happy, and a Delight in their Felicity. This his Will can never alter, no more than his Nature can change. *I am the Lord; I change not; therefore, ye, Sons of Jacob, are not consumed.* Nothing which can come within the Compass of Imagination, shall ever make a Separation between divine Love and its Objects. 2. All saving Benefits spring from the Love of God, and are *certain* Effects of it: The Gift of his Son, the Gift of his Spirit, the Bestowment of Grace, which is effectual to Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification, yea, and eternal Glory also. Hence lays the Apostle: *What shall we say to these Things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things* — (*τα πάντα*, with the Article) *all these Things?* Nothing can prevail against the Saints to their Ruin and Destruction, because God is for them. No Favour shall be wanting to them, that is necessary to their final Happiness; for, God having delivered up his Son for them, he will give them whatever is included in Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, for they are the Blessings, whereof the Apostle before speaks, and unto which he manifestly refers, and concludes with the greatest Certainty upon the Communication of, unto all those, for whom God delivered up his own Son. If this *conditional* Scheme of Salvation is true, then God loves some to whom he doth not give effectual Grace, in order to their Conversion: Then God loves some to whom he doth not communicate Grace to preserve them infallibly in a State of Holiness unto eternal Glory; thro' the Want of which they may finally and totally apostatize, become the Objects of his Hatred, and eternal Wrath and Vengeance.

But there Things are intirely inconsistent with the Nature of those, precious Promises, which God hath graciously condescended to express, for the Confirmation of the Faith, Peace, and strong

Consolation of Believers; whereby he intends to assure them of their Safety, under their Discouragements and Fears, while they are engaged in *fore and dreadful* Conflicts with Sin and Satan. If those Promises are not designed for the Confirmation of the Faith of all Believers, but only of those who are chosen to Salvation, let the Authors of this *conditional* Scheme shew us, if they are able, what is the Difference between an elect Believer, and a non-elect Saint, if any distinguishing Difference there be, by which the one may be known from the other; that the elect Believer may conclude upon his everlasting Interest in the Love of God, and of his Title to that Grace, which Promises of Perseverance express; and that the non-elect Saint may not be guilty of such Presumption, as to imagine, that his Interest in divine Love will certainly be lasting, and that he hath Foundation to conclude upon a Title to that strong Consolation, which God is abundantly willing that the Heirs of Promise should enjoy. Is the elect Believer sanctified, and the non-elect Believer unsanctified? Is the elected Believer a Subject of true Faith in Christ and the non-elected Believer destitute of that Grace? Does the former truly love Christ, and the latter not? Does one really repent of Sin, chuse Holiness, and the other not? Is the Delight of the former in spiritual Things, and hath the latter no Pleasure therein? Or are they the same as to these, and other Particulars, that might be mentioned? If they be, then there is no distinguishing Difference between an' elected Believer and a non-elect Saint; they are both Subjects of the same Holiness, Knowledge, Love, Repentance, and every thing else that is of a spiritual Nature; and their Acts are the same about spiritual Things: And, therefore, there is no distinguishing Criterion between them. Hence it follows, that the elect Believer can no more conclude upon his eternal Security, than the non-elect Saint can. The Consequence of which is, God fails of his Intention, that those *who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them, should enjoy strong Consolation*; for it seems, some, who have so done, may lose their Interest in divine Love, become Objects of God's Wrath and Curse, and perish for ever. Nor can any Believer whatever know, that this will not be his *dreadful* Case; and that Consolation cannot have any great Strength in it, which is not built upon the Immutability of God's Counsel concerning our Salvation, which to us, if this Scheme is true, must, thro' Life, be an *impenetrable Secret*, tho' the inspired Writer tells us, that God hath shewn it *by two immutable Things, wherein it is impossible for him to lie*. But, blessed be God! this *conditional* Scheme of Salvation is as surely false, as his Gospel is certainly true.

**Arg. 12.** All Believers are the Sons of God, and in Union with Christ. That Relation cannot cease, nor that Union ever be dissolved. And, therefore, this conditional Scheme of Salvation is false.

The Apostle expressly affirms, that, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*. And is not every Believer led, taught, and guided by the Holy Spirit? Or do some believe without his Instruction and Guidance? If none act Faith, but such as are under the Conduct of the Blessed Spirit, then it is a just Conclusion, that all Believers have the Honour to stand in the near Relation of Sons to God. This may also be argued for from this Consideration, *viz.* Adoption precedes, and is the Cause of the Mission of the Spirit: *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts.* I observe, that sometimes Regeneration is *confounded* with Adoption, by *good and wise Men*, for this Reason; they are not free to grant the Precedency of Adoption to Faith, it seems, thro' an Apprehension of an *ill Tendency* in this Opinion; tho' some, who embrace it, they allow, have their Minds preserved from the Influence of that Tendency. This is a favourable Judgment of Men; but it is casting *sad Reproach* on sacred Truth.

Whatever the Persons are, who believe, that Adoption is previous to, and is the Cause of Faith, the Sentiment *is a Doctrine according to Godliness*, and can give no Encouragement to *irreligious Persons*, because, as that is one Reason of our Sanctification, no unsanctified Man can have any Evidence of his Adoption, nor the least Ground to imagine from thence, that he may be happy hereafter without being holy here. And, therefore, all such Suggestions are *groundless*, and *mere Calumny* cast upon an evangelical Truth. If the Holy Spirit is sent into the Hearts of Men, because they are Sons to God, then it is most certain, that all those, in whom he operates, as a Comforter and Sanctifier, are the Objects of adopting Love. Now, this Relation to God can never cease, because it was by an *irrevocable Act* of the divine Will, that Men were constituted his Sons. This Relation gives a Right to Grace and Glory: *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ.* And this is the Privilege of every Believer; for all the Saints *are now the Sons of God*. They are as near to him in Relation, as they will be when in Heaven. This *conditional Scheme* supposes, that *true Believers* may become *Children of Wrath*, and not enjoy the heavenly Inheritance, *Woful Tidings* to spiritually humble Souls!

Again, The Saints are in Union with Christ. He is their Head, and they are his Members. Christ is the Husband of the Church, and she is his Bride. One Believer hath the same Reason to conclude upon his Union with Christ, as another; and, consequently, may infer from

thence his Interest in the tender Love, Kindness, and Care of the Blessed Jesus, with as much Certainty, as any other Christian may; and hath the same Reason for a Persuasion of his eternal Security, arising from his Union with Christ, and Interest in his Favour, as any other Saint can have. But, according to this *conditional* Scheme, *real* Saints, who are not elected, have no ground to conclude upon their Safety, because they may become Apostates, lose their Faith and Holiness, their Union with Christ may cease, and they, who once were Objects of the intense Love of Christ, may become Objects of his terrible Anger and Vengeance. And what Saint in the World can know, that this will not be his *dreadful* Care? Not one amongst them all. For there is the same Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, and every thing else of a spiritual Nature, in a non-elect Saint, as an elected Believer is the Subject of, or acts; and, consequently, the elect Believer can no more enjoy an Assurance of his lasting Union with Christ, and of future Happiness, as a Fruit thereof, than the non-elect Saint can be allured of both. This is *very melancholy Doctrine* for the Righteous, whom the Lord *would not have made sad!* But it is intirely contrary to the Gospel, which is *a joyful Sound*, and *glad Tidings of great Joy*, unto all the Saints. Spiritual Life is the Effect of a *foederal* Union with Christ, our spiritual Head; as Condemnation and Death in Sin follow upon our *foederal* Union with *Adam*, our natural Head, in consequence of his Apostacy, the Guilt of which devolves upon us, as Members of him, whom he represented. When we were not, *a real* Union subsisted between us and *Adam*, our first Head: And, when we had no Existence, a *real* Union subsisted between us and Christ, our second Head, who was constituted such to us in the Covenant of Grace. And we derive from him, in consequence of that Union, Life, Holiness, and Grace, in our Regeneration. This Union is not the Effect, but is the Cause of Faith; and this it is that secures, and will secure the Continuance of the Being of it in, our Hearts. It is as proper to say, that our Union with *Adam commences* upon our becoming sinful and depraved, as it is to affirm, that our Union to Christ *commences* upon believing: Tho' some, who assert the latter, I suppose, will not care to affirm the former. This Doctrine supposes not the Non-necessity of Holiness, but insures it; and, therefore, I am free to declare, that I am always unmoved, when I hear it vilified, as *a licentious Principle*, which I sometimes do. I only wish, that good Men would leave reproaching divine Truth.

**Arg. 13.** *This conditional Scheme is inconsistent with Non-election, or Preterition; and, therefore, it is not true.*

Election is a Choice of Men to Holiness in this World, as a Meetness for the Enjoyment of Happiness in the next. *God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit.* Those, therefore, who are the Subjects of effectual Vocation, are said to be called according to a divine Purpose: *Hath called us with an holy Calling, — according to his own Purpose. Who are the called according to his Purpose.* Hence it is evident, that the Decree of Salvation is not of larger Extent, than the Decree of Sanctification is: Nor is the Decree of Sanctification of a wider Compass, than the Decree of Salvation is. And, consequently, those, who are not chosen to eternal Salvation, but were passed by in that Decree, God had no Design to communicate Holiness unto, as a Preparative for future Glory. Besides, if it is the Intention of God to call Men by his Grace, who are not included in the Decree of Election to everlasting Life, either all, or only some of the Non-elect, he intended to call: If some of them only, then this *conditional Scheme* destroys itself, for its Extent is universal. If God designed to make all the Non-elect holy in Time, as a Meetness for enjoying Happiness in Eternity, then I would ask, why Christ, and Salvation by him, is not revealed to them all? Again, if it was the *real and serious Design* of God to make the Non-elect holy, I desire to know, why they are not made so? Is it because God cannot sanctify their Hearts, and prepare them for Heaven? This is absurd and false to suppose. It is absurd, for it implies, that God purposes to do what he is not able. It is false, because, if it was his Will to sanctify them, he is able to do it. For, if he would but put forth the same Power upon the Non-elect, as he does upon the Elect, they also would become holy, and believe in his Son *Jesus Christ*, unto the Salvation of their Souls. Since he doth not, it is falsely supposed, that he ever had a Design of making them holy. If, therefore, any of them believe in Christ, repent, and perform holy Obedience, it will be without a divine Purpose of their Sanctification and Faith. But none of them never have, nor ever will believe: For, *the Election hath obtained it, and the rest, i.e. the Non-elect, were blinded.* This *new Law-Scheme*, therefore, is utterly false: It consists of Principles no way profitable to Men, in common, tho' it is pretended to be calculated for the Benefit of Mankind universally. — It is destructive of the Comfort and Joy of the Saints. And is not conducive to the Glory of God; which will be shewn in the next Argument.

**Arg. 14.** *Altho' it is supposed in this Scheme, that effectual Provision is made for the Security of the Elect, together with a conditional Provision for the Salvation of the Non-elect, yet it is not in such a way as exalts the Glory of God; and, therefore, it is not true.*

Gracious Persons, in proportion to that Sense they have of their Safety, in consequence of the Designs and Actings of divine Favour about and towards them, will admire and adore the sovereign Goodness and Mercy of God, therein displayed; and that is their indispensable Duty. But it is by no means to be thought, that a Regard to the Glory of God is lost in that solicitous Concern, which at any time they discover for their own Safety: With others it is, but with them it is not. Salvation they desire, but not upon Terms any way lessening to the Glory of God, and of his infinite Perfections. And, as they discern, that God would never save Sinners, but in a Method most honourable to himself, they acquiesce therein, as what is proper, wise, and fit. If, upon Enquiry, this conditional Scheme appears to be calculated to bring most Glory to God in the Salvation of Sinners, I heartily acknowledge, that it ought, without any Hesitation, to be embraced as a certain and sacred Truth; for sure I am, that the ultimate End of God in saving Men is his own Glory.

Let us, therefore, carefully view this Scheme, and embrace, or reject it, as we shall find, that it is, or it is not, glorifying to God and his Perfections. Is it then for the divine Honour to fix upon such a Method to save Sinners, as is not effectual to the Accomplishment of the End intended, with respect to the far greater Number of them, when it was in the Power of God to have secured that End, respecting them all? How is this to the Glory of his Grace? Would not that have been more magnified, if the End had been ascertained, when it was with God a very possible Thing? The Salvation of the Non-elect was as easy to God, as the Salvation of the Elect. A greater Expence of Grace and Power was not required, in order to it. Is it honourable to divine Wisdom to form a Scheme that is not brought into Execution, or to design an End which is not accomplished? What can this proceed from, except a Want of Foresight, or a Defect of Power, or a Resolution in God not to do what he knew to be necessary for him to do, if he would effectually bring to pass his own gracious Intentions? Is it to the Glory of the Justice of God to imagine, that its Rights are not secured, and its Demands answered, by the Sufferings and Death of Christ? And, if they be, is it for the Honour of Justice eternally to punish those, for whose Sins Satisfaction was made? Nay, can it so much as comport with Justice to punish to the full the Sinner's Surety, and eternally to damn the Sinner himself for the same Offences? surely it by no means can consist therewith.

Is it to the Glory of the Grace of God to conceive, that Holiness, or a Meetness for Heaven, is not produced in Men by a divine Influence upon them; but that, with some Assurances only, they act in a holy

Manner, without the Communication of a holy Principle? Is this that sovereign and distinguishing Goodness of God, which the Scripture so much extols in the Regeneration and Conversion of a poor sinner? It is no more than the wan Light of the Moon is comparable to the dazzling Light of the Sun. Once more, I ask, is it to the Glory of God, and the Honour of Christ, to leave our Salvation to rest on Conditions impossible to be fulfilled? I suppose, all will conclude it is not, and that the Supposition of it is most absurd. But some will say, why is this strange Enquiry made? What Foundation is there for it? I answer, however surprizing and causeless this Question may seem to many, there is sufficient Ground for my putting it. For it is supposed, first, that the Salvation of all depends on the Performance of certain Conditions, *viz.* Faith, Repentance, and persevering Obedience. Farther, it is sup-posed, that God does not give the Grace of Faith, *etc.* to any Man; but only affords to Men some Help, whereby they may acquire it, which it is impossible for any Man to do; because, without a Principle of Life and Action, which gracious Habits are to the Soul of a poor Sinner, no Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, can possibly be produced in him. This must be granted, until it is proved, that Men are not dead in Sin; which yet has not been prov'd, nor ever will be.

Upon the whole, this conditional Scheme is not calculated to bring Glory to God, as it is far from securing Salvation to Men. On the contrary, an unconditional Scheme of Salvation. enhances the Glory of Father, Son, and Spirit. The Grace of the Father illustriously shines in the free and sovereign Election of Men to eternal Salvation. The Compassion of the Son is incomparably displayed, in the Redemption of their Persons by the invaluable Price of his own Blood. And the Kindness of the Spirit with an amazing Lustre, discovers itself in the Regeneration, Conversion, Sanctification, and Preservation of Men. Farther, all the divine Perfections in their full Glory, flame forth with an amazing and delightful Refulgency in that Scheme. Infinite Wisdom hath eternal Honours accruing to it, which contrived the happy Method, so becoming God, and so secure for Men.

Justice sparkles in its brightest Rays, in our Remission thro' the Sacrifice of Christ. The Riches of divine Grace are opened to the transporting View of Angels and Men, in the Gift of Christ to us and for us, in the Donation of the holy Spirit, and in the Bestowment of Grace upon us here, and of eternal Glory hereafter. This pleasing View fills the Minds of the Saints with holy Wonder, Joy, and Adoration, now; and the clearer Prospects thereof, in Heaven, will eternally fill them with Raptures, unknown to us at present. What then can be objected to a Scheme so wise, so righteous, and so

secure for miserable and helpless Sinners? Nothing at all, either respecting God, who saves, or Men, who are saved; but what springs from Ignorance, pride, Self-love, etc. Unhumbled Minds have much to object to it, because, if this Scheme is true, then nothing can be ours, but Shame, Confusion, and Self-abasement, on account of our Guilt, Misery, and Unworthiness; which are hard Things for our vile and proud Nature to submit unto and acquiesce in'. But true it is, let Men think of it as they please, either we must be willing to enjoy Heaven, merely on the ground of sovereign and distinguishing Mercy, wholly and alone thro' the Mediation of Christ, and by an effectual Work of the holy Spirit on our impure Hearts, or we shall unavoidably sink down into the bottomless Pit, from which there is no Redemption. And it is holy, wise, and fit, that so it should be, however severe this may seem to Men, who are destitute of the Grace of God.

**Lastly.** *This Opinion is absolutely contrary to many express Testimonies of Scripture.* My intended Brevity prevents my taking into Consideration a large Number of Texts, which most evidently refute this Doctrine. A few must suffice. I begin with those Words of the Apostle: *Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to become conformed to the Image of his Son.* This Conformity to Christ is begun in effectual Vocation, and is compleated in Glorification. And those, who are effectually called, shall be glorified. This is evident by what is subjoined: *Moreover, whom he did predistinate, them he also called; whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Two Things are clearly expressed in these Words. First, the Subjects of effectual Calling are Objects of divine Predestination unto a Conformity to the Image of Christ. Secondly, Glorification, which is the Complement of that Conformity, will succeed Vocation. Hence we may conclude, that none are effectually called, but such as are predestinated to be conformed to the Image of Christ; and that those, who are so called, shall certainly be glorified. This *new Law-Scheme* supposes the direct contrary of both there, viz. that some, who are not Objects of Predestination, may be effectually called; and that some, who are so called; may not be glorified: Both which are manifest Contradictions unto the precious Truths these Words with so much Perspicuity and Force express.

The same two Things are clearly deducible from what our Saviour asserts. *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my Sheep. My Sheep hear my Voice; I know them; they follow me; I give to them eternal Life; they shall never perish etc.* Clear it is from what is there affirmed, that those, who hear the

Voice of Christ, and follow him, which all Believers do, are his Sheep, shall enjoy eternal Life, shall never perish, shall not be plucked out of Christ's Hand, nor out of his Father's Hand; and that none, but such as are the Sheep of Christ, believe in him, hear his Voice, and follow him. The contrary of both is supposed in this Scheme: That some may hear the Voice of Christ, and follow him, who are not of his Sheep; and that some may so do, to whom Christ Will not give eternal Life, who may perish for ever. Our Lord elsewhere asserts, that *the living Water* he gives, *i.e.* Grace, *shall be a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life*, in its Subjects. According this Scheme, in some it may entirely fail, and its Subjects may sink down into eternal Death.

Again, our Lord declares, without any Exception, that *he who heareth his Word, and believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation; but is passed from Death unto Life*. This Scheme takes it for granted, that some, who hear the Word of Christ, and believe on him that sent him, *may come into Condemnation, and suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire*. Our Blessed Saviour acquaints us, that *this is the Will of him that sent him, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life*.

This Scheme supposes, that *some, who truly believe, may perish, and not have everlasting Life*. And, consequently, its Authors must either deny, that this is the Will of God concerning all such as believe, or affirm, that the divine Will is not accomplished in some. The former contradicts our Saviour: The latter evidently supposes, that *either the Will of God is mutable, or that his Power is insufficient to bring his Purposes of Grace concerning Men into Execution*. Farther, all Believers are interested in the Intercession of Christ; and what he prays for in their Behalf shall certainly be communicated to them. That all, who believe are interested in the Intercession of Christ, appears undeniably from what he lays in relation thereunto. *I pray not for these alone, but for them also that shall believe in me thro' their Word: And he prays for their being with him, that they may behold his Glory*. And, therefore, from the Prevalency of his Intercession, we must conclude upon the final Happiness of all Believers. But, according to this Scheme, some, who believe, may be *with Devils and damned Spirits, and never behold the Glory of Christ*: Let it also be observed, that the Apostle was *confident, that the good Work begun upon the Philippians would be performed until the Day of Christ*. But, according to this Scheme, his Confidence was without Foundation; for it is supposed, that Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, *specifically the same, and equal in*

*Degrees*, may be in the Non-elect, as are found in the Elect; and, therefore, to no Man are they distinguishable. Hence it follows, that, tho' it is apprehended, that the Elect shall persevere, since none have a possible Way of knowing who they be, or of distinguishing them from the Non-elect, it must be *Rashness* in any Man to be confident of the carrying on of this good Work in any *particular* Believers. The Conclusion of course must be this: That the Apostle Was an intire Stranger to this Scheme, and that it is not that Gospel which he preached, but quite of another Nature, no Gospel of Christ. That Gospel, which he was commissioned to preach, furnished him with a solid Foundation of that Confidence he expressed; and, therefore, he cannot be charg'd with the least Degree of *Temerity, or undue Boldness*, in his Language relating to this Matter. And, as this is the Security of all Believers, it demands their Gratitude, and Adoration of divine Goodness, which hath so effectually provided for their eternal Welfare. The more I think of, and examine the Nature of this Scheme, the more dearly I discern, that it is calculated to bring humble Souls into great Perplexities and Discouragements; and that it can only serve to countenance unhumbled Minds, in a mistaken Opinion of the Capacity, and the Extent of their own depraved and corrupt Faculties, to the Dishonour of God, and their own everlasting Perdition, *if Grace of no other Kind* is given to them, to open their Eyes, and sanctify their Hearts, than what this *darling Scheme*, is an Exhibition of.

Before I consider the Arguments in favour of this Scheme, I would premise there Things, *viz.* It is the Gospel which reveals *Life and Immortality*, not the Law. Again, the Gospel informs us of our Title to that happy State, and not the Law, which is the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Besides, the Gospel acquaints us with our *Meetness* for that State, which is our Sanctification by the Spirit of God. This is a Doctrine not contained in the Law, tho' it requires Purity of Heart and Holiness in Life. Hence, at Judgment, Christ will condemn the *Unsanctified*, and pronounce the *Sanctified*, blessed, according to that *wise and holy Order*, which God hath fixed in our Salvation, whereof the Gospel is a Discovery, and not the Law. Let but the Reader distinguish our Title to Glory, and our Meetness for it, and it will free him from Mistake on this important Subject. This Scheme confounds them, and makes them one and the same; whereas they are distinct Things. Our Title to Heaven is supposed, but not expressed, in that Invitation, which Christ will, at Judgment, give us to take Possession of eternal Glory, tho' our Meetness for it is therein express'd: And the Want of a Title to Life is implied in that Sentence, which Christ will pass upon the Wicked; but it is their Want of a Meetness for it, that is expressed therein, and not their Want of Title:

And, therefore, it is the Doctrine of Justification, which our Blessed Saviour discourses of, in *Matthew 25*. From thence is clearly proved, that unholy Persons shall not enjoy the heavenly State; but it is not to be learned from that Place, what is our justifying Righteousness, or our Title to eternal Life, because it is our Meetness for Heaven that is there treated of, and not our Title to it.

### **Secondly, Let us consider the Arguments for this Scheme.**

#### **Arg. 1. *The Gospel is called a Law.***

ANSW. 1. That Term is sometimes used for Doctrine, or Instruction. 2. For a fixed and stated Order. Both which are true of the Gospel: And, therefore, it is called a Law. *James 2:12. Isaiah 42:4. Romans 3:27.*

#### **Arg. 2. *Obedience is proper to a Law, and we read of Obedience and Disobedience to the Gospel.***

ANSW. 1. Disobedience intends not attending to it, which Men ought to do, as a Revelation from God. 2. Despising it, as *foolish* and *absurd*. 3. Opposing the Gospel. Neither of which proves that it consists of Precepts.

#### **Arg. 3. *It will be the Rule of Judgment.***

ANSW. 1. According as Men are *sanctified*, or *insanctified*, so they will be, at Judgment, glorified, or sentenced to Hell, agreeable to the Declaration in the Gospel. For, 2. That Declaration is *proper* to the Gospel; the Law knows nothing of it. But, 3. This is not, as it is a Law, but as it a Discovery of the *wise* and *holy* Order of our Salvation.

#### **Arg. 4. *Justification is a judicial Act, and, consequently, the Gospel, by which we are justified, is a Law.***

ANSW. I. The Gospel supplies us with a perfect Righteousness, that is the Matter of our Justification. But, 2. It is the Law, by which we are absolved from all Sin thro' the Blood of Christ, and are justified by it in his Righteousness.

#### **Arg. 5. *The Gospel confers its Benefits on Conditions, and, therefore, it is a Law.***

ANSW. 1. This Argument takes for granted, what is not prov'd, but is the Point in Question. 2. Right to Gospel Benefits arises not from our Acts, but from Christ's Obedience and Death.

#### **Arg. 6. *The Saints will be tried, whether their Faith was sincere, which must be by the Gospel, and, consequently, it is a Law.***

ANSW. 1. Many Saints have long been in the Enjoyment of heavenly Glory, *viz.* *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, David, Isaiah*, yea, all the *Old-Testament* Saints, and blessed *Paul* and *Peter, etc.* It is strange, that they must pass under a formal Trial, whether they were *meet* for Glory, who have been so long in the Possession of it.

2. The living Saints at the Coming of Christ will be *changed in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, i.e.* their Bodies will be rendered *immortal, Spiritual, and glorious*, their Souls will be purged intirely from all Sin, and they will be *caught up to meet* their triumphant, descending Lord; they will undoubtedly salute him with the higher Praises, and he will receive them with Joy and Delight. It is suprizing, that any should think, that they will after this be tried concerning the Sincerity of their Faith. 3. They will be separated from the Wicked, and placed at the right Hand of their dear Lord.

4. Christ will declare before Angels, Devils, and Men, that Love they had for him, and that Obedience they yielded unto him, which was a Meetness for eternal Glory. In all which not the least Countenance is given to this *new Law-Scheme*.

**Arg. 7. *Christ is a Lawgiver, and, therefore, the Gospel is a Law.***

ANSW. 1. Christ, as a divine Person, is a Lawgiver. 2. As Mediator, he revealed evangelical Truths, but gave no new Law. 3. He hath the Covenant of Works in his Hand, as a Judge; some he condemns by that, others he acquits on the ground of his Obedience and Sacrifice. I confess, that I have met with more Arguments in Number for this Opinion; but some of them are *illogical*, and others *coincide* with those above answered; and, therefore, I thought it unnecessary to mention them. If I might be allowed to express a *certain* Truth, I should say, that some *learned Men are very far from Accuracy* in Disputation, how much soever they are pi eased to despise illiterate Persons.

# SERMON 13

## PHILIPPIANS 2:12, 13

“Wherefore, my Beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my Presence only, but now much more in my Absence, work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling: For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.”

### A CHRISTIAN’S DUTY AND DIVINE EFFICIENCY REPRESENTED

IN A SERMON PREACH'D ON LORD'S-DAY,

*NOV. 11, 1750, NEAR CRIPPLEGATE.*

THE Apostle recommendeth Humility to the *Philippians*, and proposes to their Consideration, the great Example of Jesus Christ, in order to engage them unto the Exercise of that excellent Grace: And he commends them for their Christian Obedience, not only while he was present with them, but also when he was absent from them. They flourished in Faith and Holiness, even when they had not the great Advantage of his Ministry and Conversation.

*The Text consists of two Parts.*

**I.** An Exhortation: *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

**II.** An important Truth is asserted, with a View to the Enforcement of it: *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.*

**I. We have in the Words an Exhortation; wherein are two Things observable:** *Work out you own Salvation, with Fear and Trembling.*

**First.** The Duty itself: *Work out, etc.*

**Secondly.** The Manner in which we are required to attend unto it; *viz. with Fear and Trembling.*

**First.** Believers are required to *work out* their own Salvation. If we consider what of Salvation is already effected, it will prevent our falling into Mistakes.

The Salvation of the Saints is secured and far advanc'd, by what *each divine Person* hath already done in order to it.

**1st.** God the Father *appointed them not to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ. He chose them to Salvation, thro'*

*Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* And it is according to the Purpose of his free, sovereign Grace and Mercy, that they *are saved and called with an holy Calling*. This gracious Decree is that solid Foundation, whereon their eternal Salvation securely rests.

**2dly.** He formed the Plan of their Recovery from Ruin in his everlasting Counsels. The Difficulties attending their Salvation were such, as infinite Wisdom alone could devise Means for the Removal of, Sin must be taken away: The Honour of the Law must be maintained: The Rights of Justice must be fully secured, if they are *saved*, as well as all their spiritual Enemies conquered, and they rescued from under their Power, and Tyranny. How either of these Things might be effected, no finite Understanding, could ever have determined, as finite Merit and limited Power are absolutely unequal to such an Undertaking. The Contrivance of the *fit* Method of their Redemption, is as much to the Honour of the Wisdom of God, as the Design of it is to *the Praise of the Glory of his Grace*: For, *herein he hath abounded towards us in all Wisdom and Prudence*. Hence the Gospel of our Salvation is called *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the bidden Wisdom, which be ordained before the World to our Glory*.

And much is done by Jesus Christ in order to our Salvation from Sin, and the dreadful Consequences of it.

**1st.** Sin itself is taken away. *Once in the End of the World he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. When he had by himself, purged our Sins, he sat down on the right Hand of God.* The whole Guilt of God's People was transferred from them to Christ, their Surety. It was laid upon and imputed to him, or placed to his Account; and he removed it from them, *as far as the East is from the West. He finished their Transgression, and made an End of their Sin.* And, as he was justified or acquitted by the Father, in the Character of a Judge, upon Satisfaction made by his Sufferings and Death to Law and Justice, they, in *consequence* thereof, are as clear of all Charges of Guilt by divine Justice, as if they had never transgressed the Law of God. *When their Iniquity shall be sought for, it shall not be found; there shall be haste:* Not because they are innocent in themselves, but because Remission contains in it all their Offences. *For I will pardon them, whom I reserve. The Lord hath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen Perverseness in Israel.* None think that justified Persons are without Sin, or that their Sins are concealed from the Knowledge of God: But true it is, let Men cavil as they please thereat, justified Persons are without all Spot in the view of God, as a Judge, because Christ hath *wafed them from their Sins in his own Blood*.

**2dly.** Our blessed Saviour made Peace and Reconciliation by that infinitely- valuable Sacrifice which he offered unto God. Hereby is not intended a Procurement of Divine Favour towards Sinners. It is indeed sometimes said, that the Death of Christ procured the Favour of God towards us: But that is as great a Mistake and Error, as Men can fall into; for *Good-Will* in God to poor Sinners is the *Cause*, and not the *Effect*, of the Death of Christ for them. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son.* The Gift of Christ, therefore, results from divine Love, and did not procure it. Making Peace supposes not a Change in the Disposition of God towards Sinners. His Affection to the Persons of Men is invariable and eternally the same: Nor can it be thought otherwise, without the gross Absurdity of Imputing Passions to Deity. Tho' some, it must be confessed, express themselves on this Subject, in such a Manner, as necessarily implies this *absurd* Thought. Reconciliation by the Death of Christ is God's Approbation of and Well-pleasedness with the Sacrifice he offered for Sin, or a full, proper, and plenary Satisfaction of Justice for all the Crimes of all the Persons, in whose Stead our blessed Lord *made his Soul an Offering for Sin.* Hence Justice hath no Demand to make, either upon the Surety or the Principals, whom he undertook to redeem and save; nor any Thing to object to their Salvation and Happiness; but it moves for, grants, and concurs with Sovereign Grace, in securing Life and a Happy Immortality unto all those, who are interested in the Death of Christ.

Peace with God must be an *immediate* Effect of Christ's Death, if that was *a fit* atoning Sacrifice for Sin; which cannot be denied, without *sapping* the Foundation of all our Hopes, as Christians, and *impeaching* the Wisdom of God, which contrived this Method of our Pardon and Salvation. Hence, surely, we must be convinced, that God is reconciled to his People, before they are reconciled to him: Tho' some confidently assert, without any Explanation of what they intend, that he is not. If the Justice of God is not satisfied for our Sins by the Death of Christ, it never will be; for nothing, whereof we are the Subjects, can contribute, in the least Degree, unto the making Satisfaction for any of our Offences, Besides, it is on the Ground of Satisfaction already made, that we receive Grace from God, by which we become capable of performing Services acceptable to him by Jesus Christ; and therefore, Faith hath no causal Influence into, nor is a *proper* Condition of Reconciliation and Peace with God.

Faith receives Atonement, as what existed *prior* to its self; and, consequently, its Being is independent of that Grace, and previous to it in Existence: Nor is this inconsistent with any Truth contained either in the Law, or in the Gospel of Christ: Nor does it take from

Faith any Thing which the holy Spirit attributes to it, either in its Nature, or its Office and Work.

**3dly.** The Death of our Saviour was (*Λυτρόν* and *Απολυτρωσίς*) a Price, and an adequate Price of Redemption, or a valuable Consideration by him paid into the Hands of God, our righteous Judge, for our Freedom from Condemnation, and Deliverance from that Misery, whereunto our Sin rendered us obnoxious. *We are not our own; we are bought with a Price. We are redeemed, not with Silver and Gold, as with those corruptible Things, but with the precious Blood of Christ. He hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.*

*He gave his Life a Ransom for many.* This Price is of such a Nature, that not only it is in Value equal to that Good it was intended to obtain for us; but, if that Good is not actually bestowed on us, or if we enjoy not that Liberty and Impunity, which it was designed to procure for us, God, to whom this Price was paid, must restrain Justice; for no suitable Return can be made to Christ for what he suffered, but the actual and full Release of all the Persons, for whom he died, from every Charge of Guilt, from all Condemnation, and from the Suffering of penal Evil. The Reason is clear: The Sufferings of Christ were of a penal Nature, and that Penalty which we were liable unto: And, therefore, nothing but our Impunity is a proper Return to him for his penal Death. Nor can any Thing be required of us, in order to our escaping divine Wrath and Vengeance, which will render that uncertain. Justice requires the Bestowment of a Benefit, which is obtained, by the Payment of a valuable Consideration.

**4thly.** The blessed Jesus brought in an everlasting Righteousness. Christ, our Surety, became subject to the Covenant of Works. And he was that in his Nature which the Law requires; absolutely free from all sinful Taint and Impurity, *holy, harmless, undefiled*, the Subject of perfect Holiness and Purity in his Heart: And in his Conduct he was such as the Law demands: *He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.* So that his Obedience was as extensive as the Law's Precepts; and in him was found all that Righteousness which the divine Lawgiver expects. And the infinite Dignity of his Person puts an immense Value upon his Obedience; for, such as his Person is in Greatness, such is his Obedience in Worth and Efficacy: And, therefore, it is available unto the everlasting Justification of the many, whose Surety he was, and for whom he yielded that Obedience unto the Covenant of Works.

**5thly.** The Father accepted this Obedience of Christ, and graciously imputes it to us; this gives us a Right unto eternal Life. *The Lord is*

*well pleased for his Righteousness Sake. And we, being justified freely by his Grace, are made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.* God, our righteous Judge, ceases not to require of us Obedience to his holy Will in all Things: He abates us nothing in Point of Duty; but he requires not any *obediential Acts* of us, in order to our Acceptance with him, and as the Ground of our Claim to future Blessedness: For *Christ is the End of the Law, for Righteousness, to every one who believes.*

Again, the Holy Spirit, who reveals and applies what the Father designs unto, and what the Son hath impetrated, for the Elect, had begun a good Work in the *Philippians*. The Apostle takes this for granted; *Being confident of this very Thing, that he who hath begun a good Work in you will perform it until the Day of Christ.* They were not, therefore, in the State of Death and Darkness, nor under the Dominion of Sin and Power of Satan, or destitute of Grace and Holiness. But, on the contrary, they were Subjects of spiritual Life, and capable of performing spiritual Acts. They were made Light in the Lord. An Understanding was given unto them to know him that is true. In virtue of heavenly Light communicated to them, they discerned spiritual Things. Grace reigned in their Hearts, in Opposition to Sin, and would reign in them thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ their Lord. They were translated out of the Kingdom of Satan into that of God's dear Son. In a Word, they were the happy Subjects of Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, Patience, Meekness, Humility, or of a Meetness to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. For they were regenerated, converted, and sanctified by the Spirit of God.

Since all these Things were wrought for them, and in them, by the Father, Son, and Spirit, none of these Particulars can be included in that Exhortation the Apostle gives them to work out their own Salvation. They are not called upon to get an Interest in the Love of God, to contrive the Method of their Recovery; for they were Objects of God's everlasting Love, and the Scheme of their eternal Redemption was drawn in his eternal Counsels. They are not required to expiate their Guilt; for Christ had purged their Sin.

It was not a Branch of their Duty to make their Peace with God; for Peace was made by the Blood of the Cross of Christ, complete Atonement for Sin was already made by his Sacrifice. Nor was the Redemption of their Persons from Curse, Wrath, and divine Vengeance, a Thing to be effected; it was done already by the infinitely- valuable Price of Christ's precious Blood. Farther, it was no Part of their Business to work out a justifying Righteousness before God, and thereby procure a Right to eternal Blessedness; because an everlasting Righteousness was brought in by their dear

Redeemer: It was graciously imputed to them, and they were therein accepted with God, and were intitled to eternal Life. Moreover, as they were Persons regenerated, converted, and sanctified by the Grace of God, it can't be thought, that the Apostle requires them to get the Grace of Faith, Hope, or any other Grace of the Spirit. His Intention is not to put them upon acquiring a Meetness for Heaven, because he considers them, as being already the Subjects of that Meetness. If some Persons were to hear me express these Things, they would, it is probable, say, What was left for the *Philippians* to do? If all these Things are done, what remains for Christians to do? I answer, I fear much more than some, who discover a Concern left they should not have Work enough left for them, are really willing to do: I am afraid that it is not Labour, which they have any great Inclination unto; but it is Wages for their Work, that they are concerned for. If the Particulars above-mentioned are true, then whatever we do in Obedience to the Will of God can have no causal Influence into our Salvation, nor can be a proper Condition of it. This is the distasteful Matter, that which galls and irritates Men. If it was Work only, that they were intent upon, there Principles could not be displeasing to them. The Gospel abates nothing of Duty; but it allows us not to expect Heaven, as a Reward due to us on account of our Obedience: And that is it which offends Men.

This Exhortation, doubtless, includes in it the whole Compass of our Duty, as Christians, *viz.* Opposition to Lust in all its Branches; Caution to avoid all Temptations to Sin; Mortification to the World in its Pleasures, Honours, and Advantages; Patience, and Submission to the Will of God, under Sufferings; Readiness for the Cross; Self-Denial; Diligence in the Practice of religious Duties; Prayer; Reading; serious, close, and fixed Meditation on spiritual Things; a reverential Regard to the Gospel, and a Christian Contention for it; the solemn Celebration of evangelical Ordinances, and a conscientious Discharge of all Duties towards the Saints; such as Sympathy, Compassion, Forbearance, brotherly Love, Kindness, Charity, yea, every Thing that tends to their spiritual Advantage; and a Behaviour towards all Men, just, benevolent, humble, meek, and friendly. Besides, in all Duties suitable Graces ought to be acted; Faith, Hope, Love, Fear, Humility, and Zeal for the Glory of God. These Things tend unto the Salvation of the Soul from Sin, and its Perfection in Holiness, and, without Scruple, are intended in this Exhortation, with every other Christian Duty. He who shall take them into proper Consideration will not be of Opinion, that the Saints have not Work enough assigned unto them. If Men would but be content with Labour, without challenging a Reward of God, as a due Debt, they could have no Reason to complain for Want of Business and Employ thro' Life: But the Occasion of their

quarrelling with the Gospel is, it permits them not to expect eternal Blessedness, as proper Wages for the Toil of Duty; but represents it as the free, unmerited Gift of sovereign and distinguishing Grace. This is what is so displeasing to the Generality of Mankind, and not the Want of Labour; for to that *merely* they have no Inclination, or as it is a Duty which they owe unto their Maker. Who that will may work for them, if they may not *have Life for working*. And, because they are governed by *a selfish Disposition*, they think others are so too; and that the Reason, why any embrace the Gospel of free Grace, is, they are unwilling to perform Duty, and hope to be happy hereafter without being holy here; which is a great Mistake. But I confess, that this is not to be wondered at; for without a Principle, that is in its Nature *congruous* to the Gospel, Men will always adhere to the Law, and the Works of it, in Opposition to the Gospel of the *true Grace of God*.

Or the Sense of this Exhortation is, *Work about your own Salvation*; i.e. attend unto those Duties which *accompany* Salvation, and the spiritual Performance of which is no inconsiderable Part of your Salvation, and in its own Nature tends unto your Salvation from Sin, and Perfection in Holiness; which is the Aim of the gracious Principle in the Hearts of the Saints, tho' it is not attainable in this State.

**Secondly.** The Manner, how Believers should do this, must be considered, viz. *With Fear and Trembling*. With Fear: This intends not Consternation, or servile Dread, and Terror of Mind, thro' an Apprehension of divine Vengeance being likely to fall upon them for Sin. As this may be without the least Degree of *real* Holiness in the Heart, it will not ingenerate and promote it: For it *genders to Bondage*, and drives the Mind from God. We shall never love, delight in, and adhere to, an Object we dread; but, on the contrary, seek to avoid and flee from it, as *Adam* did, under the Influence of a Fear of this Kind, upon his Apostacy, and Tokens of God's approaching to him. His Conduct is a just Representation of that Part we shall always be inclined to act, under a Sense of Guilt, Wrath, and Vengeance, without some Degree of Hope of Mercy and Pardon. This Fear is a holy Reverence of God, arising from a Perception of his Glory in Christ, our gracious Mediator. It springs up in the Soul from an Apprehension of Divine Goodness: *They shall fear the Lord and his Goodness*. And it is cherished by a View of Remission of Sin thro' the Blood of Christ: *There is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared*. Men cannot be guilty of a greater Mistake, than to imagine, that a Hope of the Pardon of Sin excludes a holy Fear of God, and a Dread of sinning against him. Where such a Disposition rules the Mind, as that Imagination necessarily supposes, there all

*real* Religion is wanting, whatever a Man's Profession and Character may be. He, who hath not some gracious, spiritual Experience of a holy Fear of God, springing up in his Soul from a Sense of Pardon, *thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant*, is at present utterly unacquainted with the Actings of that Faith, which is of *the Operation of God*, and is absolutely necessary unto the Salvation of the Souls of Men. By how much the more Believers act Faith on free pardoning Mercy, by so much the more will their Reverence of God, and their Hatred of Sin, be promoted. And he is no Christian, who is otherwise minded. A Principle of Grace is acted on God, under the endearing Character, of the God, of all Grace; and that influences them *to serve him acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear*. Blessed be God! Some can attest, from their own happy Experience, that a Sense of Pardon, Peace, and eternal Redemption, being obtained and secured by the Sacrifice of Christ, engages to a free, gracious, and spiritual Obedience of all God's Command and unto a holy Reverence of his infinite Majesty; let others reproach the Doctrine of free and full Pardon of Sin thro' the Blood of the Son of God, as they please.

Again, this is to be done with *Trembling*, not with a *dreadful Panic*, which throws the Mind into *Confusion*, and, therefore, is not productive of an *orderly, becoming Obedience*; but with suitable Awe, and proper Humility, considering in whole View we are, to whom we are accountable, and whole Glory is concerned in all our Actions; *viz.* God, who is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; in whose *Sight the Heavens are not clean, and who charges his Angels with Folly*. Some object to an inspired Phrase — *Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling* — as *improper, strange, and uncouth*: But it is a certain Truth, that such have not a suitable Apprehension of the Majesty of God, who can persuade themselves to think, that the *deepest* Humility, the *greatest* Self-Abasement, and the *highest* Reverence, are inconsistent with spiritual Peace, and the *largest* Measure of holy Joy in God, that Christians are at any Seasons favoured with. Some will tell you, and tell truly, that they never have been possessed with such an Awe of God, as when they have enjoyed clear Prospects, by Faith, of the glorious Display of the divine Perfections in the Contrivance and Accomplishment of the Salvation of poor Sinners by Jesus Christ. They know, that the greatest Indignation against Sin, Self-Loathing and Abhorrence on account of it, and *Trembling* in the divine Presence, not only consist with, but also are always produced and cherish'd in the Saints, by the fullest Persuasion, their Souls can be blessed with, of an Interest in Pardon, Peace, and all spiritual Blessings. The contrary Opinion is a *sad Evidence* of an Unacquaintedness with a holy, spiritual Experience of the Glory, Sweetness, and Power of *real* Religion, in

the Minds of those, by whom it is embraced; let their Convictions of Sin, Dread of Wrath, and their Concern to escape infernal Torments, be what they may. A Reverence of God's infinite Greatness, Abasement under a Sense of his immense Purity, and Trembling at the Thought of his peerless and incomprehensible Majesty, perfectly consist with the highest Degree of Joy, which our Minds can possibly posses, under the Consideration of an everlasting Interest in him, as a reconciled God and Father, thro' the glorious Mediator, Jesus Christ. If these Things are duly considered, we shall see, that there is no Reason to complain of the evangelical Revelation, as what lessens the Compass of our Duty: The Truth is, it enlarges it, not by additional Precepts, as new Law, but as it is a farther Discovery of God in the Perfections of his Nature; which Discovery heightens and increases our Duty, by virtue of the Authority of the moral Law, which is an eternal Standard and Rule of Righteousness unto Men.

**II. *An important Truth is asserted to enforce the Exhortation, and to encourage the Saints in their Attendance unto it, For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.***

**1st.** Believers are Subjects of a Divine Operation; they are under an immediate, positive Influence of God.. This is clearly expressed, in various Phrases, in the Scripture. *You hath be quickened. For we are the Workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Who bath begotten us again to a lively Hope. Who were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God. Therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. No Man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts: Hath given us an Understanding to know him that is true. Unto you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom. And hast revealed them to Babes. Every Man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. They shall be all taught of God.* These Expressions, and abundance more which might be produced, are a full Evidence, that God in an *immediate* and *positive* Manner operates upon the Minds of Men, to make them holy and spiritual, and to excite and stir up the Christian unto spiritual Acts. This Influence must be of Efficacy unto the Production of the Effect therein intended: For, if *God will work, who shall let?* God either designs to make Men holy by his gracious Operations upon them, or he does not. If not, then what is his End in those Operations? If any Man can, let him declare the divine Intention therein. If he really purposes to make them holy, in order to their eternal Salvation, by his gracious Operations on them, the Effect intended must certainly be produced, except God is unable to

accomplish his own Designs, or operates in such a Manner only, as he knows will be ineffectual. If the former is supposed, then the Power of God is not equal to his Goodness and Mercy, or it is not infinite, as his Grace is; and it must be concluded, that he wills, and endeavours to do, what is beyond the Extent of his Capacity; which is *a most absurd* Imagination. If the latter is supposed, then God disappoints himself of his own End in working, because he wills not to operate in such a Manner, as would secure it; which is not *less absurd* than the former Supposition. And, therefore, it is impossible but that the gracious Influence of God upon Men, to regenerate and sanctify them, must be effectual thereunto.

The Sanctification of a Sinner includes in it a holy Principle, and the Exercise of that Principle. That God is able to excite a holy Principle into Act, when it hath Existence in the human Mind, is, I suppose, what none will scruple: The only Things, therefore, which can be questioned, relating to this Matter, are, whether God is capable of creating such a Principle, or whether it becomes him to give Existence unto such a Principle, in the Minds of Men, or whether the Nature of the human Mind will admit of it. All allow, that it is not impossible to the human Mind to become the Subject of good Habits; and the Generality of Men suppose, that it is capable of acquiring such Habits with divine Help. Cannot God then, by an Act of his all-powerful Grace, give Being to what is possible to be? Doubtless he can. And, since this is a good Work, it is not unbecoming God to exert his Power unto its Production. Nor is the Nature of the human Mind such, as not to allow of that Work upon it; for it offers no Violence to the Will, because there is no Reference had unto it, in this Influence upon the Mind, in order to its Consent, or Refusal: And, consequently, such a creating Act of God may be put forth on the human Mind, as infallibly and immediately is productive of a holy, spiritual Principle therein, without the least Abridgment of the natural Freedom of the Will. And, when such a Principle is produced in the Heart, a divine Influence upon it, to excite it unto Acts, can't reasonably be thought destructive of its free Agency; because that is no more than stirring up the Will unto such Volitions and Acts, as are agreeable to it, being thus truly sanctified by the Grace of God. And, therefore, it is a just and reasonable Conclusion, that God never fails of making Men holy, when he operates upon them by his Grace with that View. To doubt hereof, is to question his Capacity, or his Will, to bring to pass that, wherein his Glory is more concerned than in any other Work of his. Besides, the *Greek* Word signifies to work in an effectual Manner, (*ενεργων*), or with Power and Energy. And as to what is objected, from the Use of it to express the Influence of Satan upon the Minds of

Unbelievers — *The Spirit that now worketh* (ενεργουντος) in the Children of Disobedience — it is of no Weight at all; for, tho' the Devil is not able to accomplish the utmost of what he wishes to effect, even when he exerts all his Force, that is no Reason to think, that God doth not assuredly and infallibly execute his Pur- poses of Grace, when he powerfully works to that End. The Energy expressed, or implied, when attributed to Acts of a finite Power, may not in all Instances be effectual; but it don't follow, that that Energy in divine Operations is insufficient to bring about the End intended.

The *Philippians* were already regenerated, as was before observed; and, therefore, the Work of Regeneration was not now to be wrought in them. And, with respect unto that Work, we may observe, that it is an *habitual Disposition* unto Holiness, as the Depravity of our Nature is an habitual Disposition unto Evil: So that the Will is habitually inclined to what is good according to the regenerate Part, as it is habitually inclined to sin according to the unregenerate Part. God's disposing the Will to Holiness, by regenerating Grace, is here included; but I think, that his Influence upon it, to produce holy Volitions and Acts, is principally intended. Until the human Mind is the Subject of this habitual Disposition to Holiness, it is *absolutely* impossible to raise in it any holy, spiritual Desires, by the most *striking* and *rational* Considerations, which can be represented and set before it, of the evil Nature of Sin, and its dreadful Consequences, of the Excellency of Holiness, and of *the substantial*. Good, or Happiness, which consists in the intelligent Creature's Conformity to the Will of God, and in the Enjoyment of a Sense of his Favour. Some will say, this is exceedingly strange indeed! What! is Reason lost? Are Men irrational, and utterly sunk into Brutality? Answ. No: Their Nature is rational, and ever will be; but it is the subject of an *Infatuation* and *Madness*, in relation unto spiritual Things, which is *incurable* without the Grace of God. That, Opposition to God, and the Choice of Evil are *unreasonable*, is undoubtedly a Truth; but an apsotate intelligent Creature will never be disengaged from that Opposition, and withdrawn from that Choice, by any Reasoning, however just and forcible it is. Good Men, I think, must be convinced that this is Fact from their own Experience; tho' sometimes they may express themselves, in *Expostulations with Sinners*, in such a Manner, as supposes the contrary. We are not to conclude, from the Reasonableness of Duty, upon the Inclination and Power of corrupted Reason to comply it, even when it is represented in the best Light any Man is capable of doing it. If the actual Infliction of Punishment for sin changes not the natural Disposition of a Sinner, (than which nothing is more true) there is no Reason to think, that Threatenings of Penalty, when

pressed in the closest Manner on the Consciences of Men, will ever alter the corrupt Bias of their depraved Will. If it is a real Fact, that the human Mind is *alienated from the Life of God*, and is *Enmity against him*, then not the most affecting Representations of eternal Felicity, which consists in the Enjoyment of Him, the Origin of all Blessedness, will prevail with it unto a Choice of God. And that this is really the Care, both Scripture and Experience testify, beyond all modest and reasonable Contradiction. Hence we must conclude, that a Disposition or habitual Inclination to Holiness is not, cannot be, acquired, even with divine Help; but that it is a *supernatural Effect*, which is solely produced by the infinite Power of God; and that no Acts of an holy, spiritual Nature, can spring up in the human Mind, before such a Disposition is created therein. And, therefore, God is the alone Author of all holy Volitions and Acts in Men. In Regeneration he gives Existence to a Disposition, which is the Root and Spring of all *obediential* Acts to his holy Will: That is the Holiness of the human Will radically; and good Volitions arising from it, as it is sanctified and influenced by divine Grace, are its Holiness actually.

**2dly.** The Necessity of a gracious and heavenly Influence upon the Will of a Christian, to draw it forth into Acts of holy Obedience, will appear, if we consider, that he is the Subject of a Law of Sin. None who are Subjects of Grace, I dare to say, will scruple to grant, that Sin dwells in them. All, who are *Spirit*, know themselves to be *Flesh* also. Them is the *old Man*, as well as the *new Man*, in all the Saints. The Heart of every Believer hath in it a Fountain, which is corrupt, as well as a Spring and Source of Purity. Nor is this bitter Fountain sweeten'd by Grace. Its Nature is as *vile*, *impure*, and *deadly*, as ever. Neither are the Actings of the Mind, according to this corrupt and evil Principle, of a Nature different from what they were, before that Principle of Grace was infused into the Soul. All its Imaginations are evil, and only evil, continually. The Thoughts which spring up in the Mind from it are *disorderly*, *vain*, and *wholly unspiritual*. Its Volitions likewise are of a sinful Nature. The Objects it pursues are *carnal*, *vain*, and *pernicious*. The Tendencies of the Affections, as under its Influence, are unto Thing, *unprofitable*, *light*, and attended with *baneful* Effects, to the better Part. And the old Man is ever ready for Action; he is at no Time unprepared for that Service wherein he is engaged. Nor does the Mind tire and wax weary in sinful Gratifications. So far is it from that, that its Desires after what is evil are enlarged, by those Gratifications. The Power, Deceitfulness, Treachery, and Violence of the Law of Sin, in the Minds of the Saints, are *wonderful*, *terrifying*, and *extremely dangerous*. As far as indwelling Sin acts its Part, so far is the gracious Principle interrupted and impeded in its Exercise: For, as

far as the Mind is under the Influence of the old Man, so far it is prevented from acting under the Direction of the new Man. There contrary Principles may and do inhabit in the same Breast but the Will can't be determined in its Volitions at the same Time by each Principle. If it makes a Choice agreeable to the Flesh, it cannot, at that Season, and in those Instances, determine itself on the Side of the spiritual Part. Now, if we take there Things into due Consideration, with much more that might be observed concerning the corrupt Part of the Believer, surely we must be convinced, that a divine Influence is absolutely necessary unto the Will's closing with a spiritual Good, presented to it, even where it hath an habitual Inclination thereunto; because the Counter-actings of Lust are great Hindrances, and Impediments to the Actings of Grace in the Soul.

Farther, nothing more is required to the Acting of the Flesh in a Believer, than the Preservation of the Mind in a State of Being and Activity; but the Spirit in a Christian, with relation unto its actual Exercise, is dependent on the Influence of that Grace, which gave it Existence. Saints can act in a sinful Manner, without any Operation upon them to elicit and draw forth their corrupt Inclinations; but they are not able to act in a holy, spiritual Sort, unless that gracious Principle in them is drawn forth into Exercise by Influence upon it from above. If divine Power supports but the depraved Mind in Being, it can act in an unlawful Manner of itself; but supporting in Existence the spiritual Principle is not the only the Thing required unto the Exertion of itself. The Flesh in all its Motions acts without any positive Influence upon it from God; but the Spirit is dependent on his Aid, Assistance, and gracious Influence in its actual Exercise. Such who are Sanctified can think of and chuse what is evil of themselves; but they are not sufficient of themselves, as of themselves, to think any Thing that is good and holy. And, therefore, all holy Thoughts, all holy Desires, and heavenly Motions in their Hearts, owe their actual Rise, unto the Influence of the Grace of God upon their spiritual Part, which, as to its Exercise, is dependent on that Influence, as, with respect to its Continuance in Existence, it is dependent on a constant Influx of divine Power to support it. The latter is common to it with all created Beings: The former hath a Speciality in it, agreeable unto its special and peculiar Nature. Natural Being is derived from God, as the Author of Nature; and an Influence from him, as such, is sufficient to its Acts: But a spiritual Being is derived from him, as the God of all Grace; and the Influences of his Grace are necessary unto the Acts of that Being.

**3dly.** It is by virtue of a divine Influence that a Christian performs what his spiritual Part wills to do. The Volitions of the gracious Principle are always pure, spiritual, and holy; for, such as that

Principle is in its Nature, such are all the Acts of the Mind springing from it. As the corrupt Part is an Inclination to Evil, so Grace is an Inclination to Holiness: And it is, in its actual Exercise, a Will to universal Purity, or a Desire to yield a perfect and uninterrupted Obedience to the Will of God. Unholy Desires naturally arise from the Flesh; and it is capable of pursuing and acting what it chuses; yea, many Times it is with great Difficulty, that it is prevented proceeding in a sinful Pursuit. But the regenerate Part being dependent on an external Influence in its actual Exercise, it is incapable of reiterated Acts of Holiness, without the Favour of a heavenly Influence upon it is continued to maintain its Exercise. And, as the Flesh is constantly counter-acting the Spirit in a Believer, he is often prevented doing what he chuses to do thro' that Opposition from his corrupt Part. O! how many delightful, sweet, and spiritual Meditations are quite marr'd, and broke off, by the contrary Actings of the carnal Part! In what a sad Manner does the Mind of a poor Believer many Times change from a holy, heavenly Frame, in solemn Duties, into a carnal, cold, wandering, and careless one! How soon is the Mind diverted from converting, with the most glorious Objects, which fill it with Joy and Complacency, by the Presentation of some worthless and vain Object, thro' the Strength of Corruption, and the Weakness of Grace, in itself! There Things give a full Conviction to the Saints of the Necessity of gracious and constant Supplies of spiritual Strength from God, to enable them unto a uniform, holy, and continued Obedience to his righteous Precepts. *To will is sometimes present with them; but how to perform what is good they find not.* And, therefore, they resolve to go in the Strength of the Lord, and to be strong in the Grace, which is in Christ Jesus, not depending on their innate Ability; for they are sensible, that what they are: as to Spirituality and Holiness, both in Principle and Acts, they are by the Grace of God; that it is not they who live, but Christ liveth in them, as they are Christians; and that whatever is done by them in a holy Obedience, it is not they that do it, but the Grace of God, which is with them. They are most free to acknowledge, that they are NOTHING, and that without Christ they can do Nothing; that they are unable to think a good Thought, to raise any holy Desires in their Minds, and are incapable performing any Duty in a holy, acceptable Manner, without Supplies of Grace from Christ, their Head of Life, and Influence, who filleth all in all. They know, that all they do without him is nothing; that there is no more of Spirituality and real Holiness in any of their Meditations, Prayers, or other Duties they perform, than what they are filled with from Him, the Fountain of all their Life and Purity.

Hence we may see what a foolish, as well as evil Thing spiritual Pride is. What Ground can we have of Self Commendation and

Applause, who have no more of Holiness, either as to Principle or Acts, than what is derived from the Fountain of free Grace, and unto which we are influenced by the Spirit of Christ? And from hence we may safely collect, that we are real Saints, if there is any Thing of true Holiness in our Hearts, tho' we may have much Occasion of Sorrow, Humiliation, and Self-Abasement, on account of indwelling Corruption: But let not that prevent us giving Thanks to God, for making us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Let us also be encouraged to hope, yea, firmly to believe, while we are struggling with our strong, raging, and furious Lusts, that God will take care of our better Part, and *perfect what concerns us*: He certainly intends to give us Glory, if he hath given us Grace. This surely is also sufficient to convince us, that Salvation is not *properly* conditional. The Experience of every Christian is an Evidence thereof in itself; tho' some, for Want of due Attention to it, may endeavour to maintain that it is.

**4thly.** God works in a gracious Manner upon the Minds of Men, of his good Pleasure.

The Implantation of the spiritual Principle in Regeneration is of the free and sovereign Favour of God. Nothing in them could induce him to it; for their Nature is wholly corrupt, and their Conduct is one continued Act of Rebellion against him, until that Principle is created in them. They are under the Dominion of Sin, and entirely engaged in serving of Lusts, either of a sensitive intellectual Kind, before this good Work is begun in them. And, therefore, Grace communicated in Regeneration is what springs from Goodness, sovereign, free, and entirely unmerited. There was nothing more in the Subjects of this Work, than a mere natural Capacity to receive Grace from God; which the greatest Sinners upon Earth are capable of. There was no Congruity to Grace in the Disposition and Temper of our Minds, moving unto the Communication of it. The most we can say of ourselves is, that our Souls, as they are of a rational Nature, were Subjects capable of being thus wrought upon by God, the Father of Spirits. And, therefore, this was an Act of pure Mercy and Grace to beget us again to a lively Hope by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead. As we are fared, so we are called with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to God's Purpose and Grace. That is the *sole* Cause of it, without any Motive in us. And it is a glorious Instance of rich Mercy, that we were quickened, when dead in Trespasses and Sins. It is a Fruit of Love to our Persons, yea, of great and infinite Love in the Heart of God towards us, when we were altogether unlovely, and the Subjects of nothing but what rendered us *hateful* and *abominable*. His Grace was exceeding abundant with Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus.

Divine Love to our Persons was *prior* to, and is the Cause of, all in us that is good and pleasing to God. No other Reason can be assigned, why God formed us for himself, that we might shew forth his Praise, but his own rich Grace. He had Mercy on us, because he would have Mercy, and for no other Reason whatever. Let us, therefore, give him all the Glory, and say always, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, unto thy Name give Glory. We had no more Concern in this gracious Work upon our Hearts, than our Lusts have in the Cherishing and Improvement of this holy Principle, to which they are entirely contrary in Nature, and in all Instances, more or less, oppose its Actings.

Influence upon this Principle, to preserve its Being, and draw it forth into Act, is of God's good Pleasure. As we were brought into a State of Grace by sovereign Kindness and Mercy, so we are upheld in that State by the same Cause. This is the solid Basis of our Security. If we consider our many Imperfections; if we consider our numerous and great Provocations, thro' the Power of Sin in us, and the Force of Temptations without us; if we consider how little we honour God, and how much we dishonour him by Unbelief, Pride, Covetousness, and a Fondness for Things that perish in the Using; if we consider, that we are regardless too often, not only of God and his Glory, but also of our own best Interest, (which we always are, when we neglect to glorify our heavenly Father by a humble, close, and spiritual Walk with him); if we consider that in nothing we can be profitable to God, when we are most holy in our Dispositions and Behaviour; I say, if we consider these Things, surely we cannot but fully be convinced, that divine Good-Will and Favour is the Cause of the Preservations of our Persons in a State of Grace, and of the Animating and Reviving of our Graces, Faith, Hope, Love, and all others, unto the unspeakable Joy of our Souls. Now, what Enforcement may this important Truth give unto the Exhortation before considered? If it is God who works in us, in the Actings of all our Graces, and in our spiritual Performance of all Duties, what Fear, Reverence, and holy Awe, ought ever to possess our Minds in our Acts of Christian Obedience! God dwells in our Hearts, not as an unconcerned Spectator of the Part we act but as an exact Observer of our Thoughts,

Volitions, Pleasures, and of all the Tendencies of our Affections: And, therefore, how watchful, holy, humble, and spiritual, ought we ever to be, in walking before him! Again, what Encouragement does this precious Truth afford to our Faith and Hope! Tho' we are conscious to ourselves of the greatest Unworthiness, which might provoke God finally to withdraw from and leave us, we may conclude upon it, that he will not so do, since all his benign and

salutary Influences are Effects of his good Pleasure, that is a never-changing Cause: And, consequently, what Effects soever depend on that Cause will assuredly continue to be. Infinite Grace, which gave us Life, when we were dead in Sin, will certainly maintain, revive, and perfect that living Principle in a Life of eternal Glory, whereunto the God of all Grace hath called us.

## SERMON 14

### THE SOLEMN CHARGE OF A CHRISTIAN MINISTER CONSIDERED

#### A SERMON PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REVMR. JOHN RYLAND, ON THE 26TH OF JULY, 1750.

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#### 2 TIMOTHY 4:1, 2

“I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his Appearing and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-Suffering and Doctrine.”

As that Part of the Service of this Day is allotted unto me to address you, my dear Brother, who have now taken upon you the Care of this Church, I shall do it in an Attempt to explain this *awful Charge* of the *Apostle to Timothy*. ***This Charge consists of two Parts,***

**I.** The Preface.

**II.** The Matter of the Charge, or the several Branches of Duty thus solemnly enjoined on him.

**I.** *I would briefly consider the Preface, I charge thee, therefore, before God, who is infinitely Holy, All-knowing, and Immense in every Perfection: And the Lord Jesus Christ, who tries the Reins, whose Ambassador you are, to whom you are accountable, whose Gospel you are to preach, whose Church you are to feed, guide, and preside among. Who shall judge the Quick and the Dead. All Judgment is committed to him, as God-Man, and Mediator: For the Father hath given him Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.* The Subjects of his Judgments are the *Quick* and the *Dead*. The *Quick* intend such of Mankind, who will remain and be alive at his Coming: And the *Dead* are such, as in all Ages of the World have passed under the Stroke of Death, whole *Spirits*

*returned to God who gave them, and their Bodies to Corruption and Dust.*

This Judgment he will execute at his Appearing. The Son of God hath already appeared in our World at the Time appointed of the Father, which is called *the Fulness of the Time. Once in the End of the World he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself.* When he had done and suffered all that was necessary to *the eternal Redemption of the Church, he sat down on the right Hand of the Majesty on high; and the Heavens must receive him until the Times of Restitution;* when he will appear the second Time, without Sin, unto Salvation. Then every Eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him.

Farther, this Judgment he will execute at his Kingdom. He now rules over all; for all Power in Heaven and in Earth is given unto him. He is the Head of all Principality and Power in Heaven, and by him Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice. By him Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth. Besides, he exercises a special Government over the Church: For he is that King, whom God hath set on his Holy Hill of Zion. He gives Laws unto her, which are wisely calculated to preserve Order, Peace and Harmony, and he defends her from the Rage and Fury of her numerous and potent Enemies. So that he now exercises a regal Authority. Hereafter he will reign before his Ancients gloriously. He will take to himself his great Power, and reign, tho' the Nations be angry, and shower down Wrath and Vengeance on all his and the Church's Enemies, who will be offended at his Dignity and Glory.

The Sense of this solemn Preface is, As thou regardest the Honour of God, his Authority, and art desirous to approve thyself to him, diligently and faithfully attend unto the Duties of thy Station in the Church: As thou expectest to appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, neglect not those important Services which are proper to thy Character, who art his Ambassador, and to whom thou must give an Account of thy Conduct, in that high and honourable Office. This is a very awful and solemn Charge indeed; and, doubtless, those Duties which the Apostle introduces with such Solemnity must be of the greatest Importance to the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church; which I shall now proceed to consider.

## **II. *The Matter of this Charge consists of several Branches.***

**First.** *Preach the Word;* The Word of God; The Word of Truth; The Word of Life; The Gospel of Salvation: The Gospel of the Grace of God: Of the true Grace of God, and not the Counterfeit of it. Unto these Things all will assent who profess Christianity, how different

soever their Sentiments are concerning Doctrines. *Papists*, *Socinians*, *Arminians*, and *others*, must allow the Truth of what is expressed in there several Modes of speaking. And, therefore, you must permit me to declare in an *explicit* Manner, my Apprehensions of Christian Principles. And I would propose a Query, and give an Answer to it.

*Query.* How may we know that any Doctrine is that of *the true Grace of God?* Answ. If it exalts the Glory of the Grace of God, as the *sole* and *entire* Cause of Salvation: If it humbles the Creature, and *excludes all Boasting*: If it provides for the Honour of the Law and Justice of God: If it is a solid and sure Ground of *strong Consolation* to the Saints: If it is a Doctrine *according to Godliness*. There are *infallible* Rules, whereby you may form your Judgment of Doctrines. No Principle can be true, which is not calculated to subserve and secure these important Ends; and, therefore, it will be your Wisdom to examine all Sentiments in Divinity by them, and, as you shall find them agreeing, or disagreeing with those Rules, embrace, or reject them.

The following Doctrines, in my Apprehension, upon Enquiry will be found Truths by those Rules; and, therefore, in my Opinion, you ought to preach them.

**1st.** Publish the Doctrine of God's *free, sovereign, and eternal Love*. It is his *good Pleasure*, and *irrespective* of any Motive in the Objects of it. Divine Love is *sovereign*, and is fixed on whomsoever it was the Will of God favourably to regard. *God hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*. Again, it is eternal: *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; and, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee*. The Father hath loved the Elect, as he hath loved Christ; and *he loved him before the Foundation of the World*; and, consequently, they were interested in the Favour of God before the Commencement of Time.

**2dly.** Preach the Doctrine of *personal* and *inconditional* Election to everlasting Life. This is a Doctrine clearly expressed in the Holy Scripture: *According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love*. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called. Because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation. And this is an Act of free Grace: *According to the Election of Grace*. Again, it is an *irrevocable Decree*. *The Foundation of God standeth sure; having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his*.

**3dly.** Preach the Doctrine of the *invariable Acceptation* of the Persons of the Elect with God in Christ their Head. They were

*chosen in him: Grace was given them in him, and in him were they, preserved*, before Calling, and in order to it. As Adam was the Representative of his Seed, they were considered in him, *they sinned in him, and fell with him in his first Transgression*. By his Act of Disobedience they were *made Sinners*, and with him came under the Condemnation of the Covenant of Works: So all the Elect, who are the *Seed of Christ*, were considered in him, and represented by him, as the Head of the Covenant of Grace, and their Persons always were accepted with God, as view'd in Christ their Representative; *having made us accepted in the Beloved*. Nor is there the least Inconsistency between these Things, *viz.* The Condemnation of the Elect in their *natural Head*, and the Acceptation of their Persons in Christ their *spiritual Head*. It is to me *astonishing*, that any of those, who grant the Truth of their actual Union with Adam, by Virtue of a divine Constitution, and their Guiltiness and Condemnation upon his Sin, in Consequence of that Union with him, should deny their *real* and *actual Union* with Christ, by Virtue of a divine Constitution, in the Covenant of Grace, and the Acceptation of their Persons with God on that Foundation.

Let me advise you carefully to take a *complete View* of every Subject, about which you shall at any Time treat. This is absolutely necessary: For, by a *partial View* of a Doctrine, many Persons are led into Mistakes concerning it. I will give you an Instance or two of this Kind.

Sometimes it is objected to the Doctrine of *absolute* and *inconditional Election* to eternal Life, that, if this is true, then Holiness here is not necessary to Happiness hereafter. If it was considered, that Election Is a Decree to make Men holy in Time, as a *Meetness* for the Enjoyment of Felicity, in Eternity, such an Objection could not, with any Shew of Reason or Justice, be raised against that Doctrine. Again, it is objected to that View which God takes of the Elect in Christ, that it hath a Tendency to make Men easy under a Prevalency of Sin, or to flatter themselves that they are in a fare State, tho' they are under the Dominion of Lust. But, if it was considered, that the Acceptation of the Persons of the Elect in Christ is that Foundation on which Grace is communicated to them, and that without Holiness none can have the least *Evidence* that they are of the Number of those, whole Persons are accepted with God in Christ, a Man must have a very small Degree of Discernment indeed, who is not able to see that such an Objection is *groundless* and *wholly foreign* to the Nature of the Doctrine. That Reasoning is always *false*, in any Science, which proceeds upon a *partial View* of a Subject; and those Consequences, which are drawn from it, have nothing more than the *Appearance* of Weight; in Fact they are mere

*Wind and Emptiness:* And yet, sometimes good and wise Men in popular Discourse are guilty of this Weakness, and frequently they are so, when discoursing on this important Subject.

Farther, be sure to distinguish well. Without this, you may sometimes find yourself at a Loss to answer Objections against the most momentous Doctrines of the Gospel; among which I reckon that of God's *eternal* and *invariable* Love to the Persons of his People. Some will say, if this is true, then God is as well pleased with them, when they neglect their Duty, and sin against him, as he is, when they are obedient to his Commands. In answer to which, you must distinguish between God's Love to *the Persons of his People*, and his *Approbation* or *Disapprobation* of their Actions: Neither of the latter is included in the first; they are both quite of distinct Consideration from it. His Displeasure with their sinful Actions, and the *awful* Tokens of it, are not at all inconsistent with his invariable Love to their Persons.

**4thly.** Preach the Doctrine of *full* and *proper* Atonement, and Satisfaction for sin, by the Death of Christ. Herein you will consider the Origin of it, *viz.* the *sovereign* Will of God, which is clearly seen in determining to admit of a Surety. This was not a *Relaxation* of the Law, either in its Commands or Threatenings; but a *Commutation* of Persons, or a Purpose to permit another to take our Obligation upon himself, in order to our Release. Again, it was an Act of *Sovereignty* in God to appoint and provide this Surety for us. Besides, you must shew who this Surety is: That he is the Son of God, and truly Divine, the Father's Equal in every Perfection: *The Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person: In the Form of God;* and that *he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God:* That he is truly Man, of the same Nature with us, but absolutely free from that moral Impurity which attends us: That he took *real* Flesh, but only *the Likeness of sinful Flesh:* Moreover, that he is God and Man united. This is one eminent Branch of the Mystery of Godliness. *Without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the Flesh. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us.* You must shew his Coming under the Law, in order to our Redemption from it, as a Covenant.

*When the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them who were under the Law.* You will observe, that, as he came under the Law for us, our Crimes were imputed to him. *All we, like Sheep, have gone astray: The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. He who knew no Sin was made Sin for us. He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree.* As we are made righteous by the Imputation of Christ's Obedience to us, who in ourselves are unrighteous, so he was made

Sin by the Imputation of our Sins to him, who in himself was absolutely spotless and innocent. Farther, you will observe, that he was made a Curse: *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* God drew all the *keenly-pointed* Arrows of his Law, and directed them against our Surety; they penetrated deeply into his Breast, and gave him Wounds inexpressible. And I think that you must necessarily discern, that he endured the Wrath and Vengeance of God, unto which we were obnoxious in Consequence of Sin. *Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow; smite the Shepherd,* was the awful Language of the Father in the Character of a Judge, punishing our Sins in the Person of Christ our Surety.

This Doctrine will lead you to treat of the Covenant of Grace, wherein this *amazing* Transaction was agreed on and settled between the Divine Father and the Eternal Son. And from hence I am persuaded that you must conclude, that Sin is expiated, *Transgression finished, and Sin made an End of*, as to its Guilt: That the Curse of the Law is removed, or the Persons of God's People are delivered from it: That there is *no Fury in God* against them; but that *he is pacified towards them for all that they have done.* For, *Peace is made by the Blood of Christ's Cross:* And *we, being justified by his Blood, shall be saved from Wrath thro' him.* Satisfaction was given both to Law and Justice for all our Sins by the Death of Christ; and, therefore, Reconciliation is a *necessary* and *immediate* Effect of his Death. From hence it evidently follows, that the Death of Christ could not be of universal Extent. *He who shall undertake to prove, that Christ made Satisfaction for the Sins of no Man, if he died for all Men, will have a very easy Task before him.* Nor do any of those, that understand themselves, believe the Doctrine of proper and full Satisfaction for Sin by the Sufferings of Christ, who embrace the Opinion of the universal Extent of his Death. It is impossible that they should so do, tho' they speak of his *Atonement, Ransom, and Satisfaction*, whereby they sometimes deceive and impose upon the *Unwary*.

My Brother, let me advise you to study thoroughly this important Article of the Christian Faith: Make yourself Master of the Objections of the *Socinians* against it, and learn to answer them solidly; and then you will have nothing to fear from some others, whose Sentiments in this Point *have no final Affinity with theirs*, how much soever they pretend to be their Adversaries on this weighty Subject. By a close Enquiry into this Doctrine, you will obtain a clear View of the *sovereign* Grace and Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, and *inflexible* Justice of God, as displayed in our Salvation, and such a Prospect of the Harmony of all the Attributes of God therein, as

will fill your Soul with Delight and Astonishment, and will be an *unshaken* Foundation of your Hope, in the *darkest* and *most trying Seasons*, you may meet withal in your Christian Race: Which are very sufficient Reasons to engage you unto an *assiduous* Study of this *momentous* Doctrine of our holy Religion, and to cause you to use your *utmost Efforts* to defend it, by whomsoever it is opposed.

**5thly.** Preach the Doctrine of Justification by the Righteousness of Christ. In treating on this Subject, it will be needful to shew, that Christ was not a *proper* Subject of the Covenant of Works on his own Account. His human Nature, tho' in Union with the Son of God, is, and ever will be, under a Law; that necessarily results from the Dependance of it upon, and its Relation unto God, as a Creature. The Angels are under a Law. The Saints in Heaven are under a Law, and eternally will be so; for it is impossible, that any Creature should not be in a State of Subjection to the Will of God; and the divine Will is a Law, and everlasting binding on the Creature. This is inseparable from the Relation which is between God and the Creature. The Covenant of Works is *more than a Law*; it is a Law with Sanction, it promises Life on condition of Obedience, and threatens Death in case of Disobedience. Now, as Christ was God as well as Man, it was incompatible with the Dignity of his Person to come under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works on his own Account. Besides, as he was not a natural Descendant of *Adam*, nor related to him, as a Member, whom he represented, he could not have any Concern with that Covenant, which was made with him as the Head of all who naturally descend from him, but by a special Constitution and Appointment of God, for Ends not respecting himself, but others. These Things will enable you to answer the most *plausible* Objection against the Doctrine under Consideration, *viz.* that Christ stood obliged to fulfil the Law for himself, and, therefore, could not fulfil it for others: Also hence you will be furnished with an *irrefragable* Argument in favour of this glorious Truth. For, if it is true, that Christ could not come under the Covenant of Works on his own Account, then it evidently follows, that his becoming a Subject of that Covenant was for others, and his Obedience to the Terms of it is intended for the Benefit and Advantage of others. Again, his Righteousness is accepted of the Father for his People, and is by him imputed to them. Farther, they are justified therein, and thereby are *made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life*. Once more, you must shew, that the Law is *magnified and made honourable* by Christ's Subjection to it, and his Fulfilling of it. And that, therefore, the Wisdom and Righteousness of God, as well as his rich Grace and Mercy, illustriously shine in this most admirable Constitution.

**6thly.** Preach the Doctrine of the efficacious Grace of God. Here you must shew the Necessity of Regeneration, which will lead you to treat of the Depravity of our Nature. Two Things are true of us all in a natural State: One is, that we cannot come to Christ: The other is, that we will not come to him. Say some, *our Cannot consists in a Will-not*; but it is a very great Mistake; they are distinct Things, and not the same. We cannot, as we are destitute of a Principle of Life; and we will not, as we are the Subjects of vicious Habits, which determine us against such an Act. I am sorry to find any to confound Things that are so manifestly distinct, with a View to give Countenance to what may with far less Danger be given up, than that of our natural Inability to act Faith on Christ. What Opinion soever requires the Denial of our Want of Power to believe to support it, ought eternally to sink; for true it is, we are *dead*, and cannot act spiritually, no, *not in the least Degree*.

Again, you must shew, that the Grace of God is the sole and *effectual* Cause of our Regeneration: That it is the *sole* Cause of it: That Men do not, nor can, prepare themselves for it: That the Grace of Regeneration is not given to any on Conditions, or because of fit Dispositions and Qualifications in them for it: And that the Production of Holiness in us is without the Concurrence of our Will with the Grace of God.

Besides, you are to shew the Efficacy of the Grace of God. That, as Light sprang up into Existence in the old Creation upon God's saying, *Let there be Light*, so in the new Creation spiritual Light rises into Being in our dark Minds immediately upon God's willing it to be.

As Grace in us is a Principle of new Life, the divine Influence to give it Existence must necessarily be effectual unto its Production: For God can never attempt what he is not able to effect. He wills not to do all he is able to perform; but he *always* and *infallibly* accomplishes what he designs: If *he will work, none shall let*. He *takes away the Heart of Stone out of our Flesh, and gives us an Heart of Flesh*. We are made *willing in the Day of his Power*. And *we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*. We *make not ourselves to differ. Faith is not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God*. And it is *God that worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure*.

**7thly.** Preach the sweet, glorious, and important Doctrine of the final Perseverance of the Saints. The Arguments are many, by which this precious Truth may be established, besides direct scriptural Proofs of it, *viz.* God's unchangeable and inseparable Love. His unalterable Purpose. *His Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure*.

That sufficient Provision of Grace, which he hath made in the Covenant of Grace, in order to it, which *is all our Salvation and all our Desire*. His Relations unto his People. He is their Father, for he *hath predestinated them to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself*. And, *because they are Sons, he sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their Hearts*. *Being Sons, they are Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ*. God stands in a *conjugal Relation* to them. *Their Maker is their Husband*. He hath *betrothed them to himself for ever*. Again, their Union with Christ is a strong Argument in Favour of this Doctrine. He is their Head, and they are his Members: *Of his Flesh, and of his Bones*. Besides, they are his Purchase: *They are not their own, they are bought with a Price*, which Price is the Blood of Christ. They are *redeemed, not with Silver and Gold, as with those corruptible Things; but with the precious Blood of Christ*. Those whom he hath purchased, at such Expence, he will never lose, if all the Power he is possessed of is sufficient to preserve them safe. Moreover, they are justified by his Blood and Righteousness: And Justification gives a Right unto, and certainly will be succeeded by Glory. *Whom he justified, them he also glorified*. Farther, the In-dwelling of the Spirit in Believers secures their Perseverance. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. He is in the Saints as a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life*. And direct Scriptural Proofs of this comfortable Doctrine are many. *The Righteous shall hold on his Way, and he that hath clean Hands shall grow stronger and stronger. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, that can never be moved. He bath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. And they shall not depart from me. The Lord will give Grace and Glory. And this is the Will of him that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life. My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them; they follow me; I give to them eternal Life; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand*. These Testimonies abundantly confirm the important Truth of the final Happiness of Believers. You will observe, that it is not intended, that in no Instance Sin shall gain a Prevalency in and over them: And that it is not designed, that God will not correct his disobedient Children; *but that he will not kill them*, as one observes. That he will humble and bring them to a Sense of their Duty again, either when a *Stupor* seizes them, or Sin prevails and breaks forth in them. That *he will heal their Backslidings, and love them freely, and not turn away from them to do them good*. And, therefore, they have the firmest Ground for a holy Confidence, in all their Conflicts, Trials, Temptations, and

Distress of Soul, *that be who hath begun a good Work in them will perform it until the Day of Christ. The Lord will not forsake the Work of his own Hand; but perfect that which concerneth his Saints.*

If you try these Doctrines by the *Criterions* beforementioned, I think that you will easily, plainly, and fully discover, that they are the Doctrines of *the true Grace of God*. They certainly are calculated to exalt and enhance the Glory of divine Grace in the Business of our Salvation.

And they are wifely designed to *hide Pride from Man*, and to *exclude all Boasting* in him. Besides, these Sentiments are calculated to vindicate the Holiness, Righteousness, and Justice of God, in our Recovery and Salvation. Moreover, they are a solid and immovable Ground of *strong Consolation to all who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them*. Once more, they are Doctrines *according to Godliness*. A Scheme of Principles suited to ingenerate and maintain in the Minds of all those, whose Comfort is in them intended, Love to God, a holy Reverence of him, and most fervent Desires to obey and serve him in all Things. It is only the Want of an Acquaintance with their Nature, and the Prevalence of a legal Disposition in the Minds of Men, with a secret Love of Sin, how much soever they are filled with Terrors on account of it, which can cause them to entertain a contrary Opinion of these Doctrines. Such, who have any Experience of their Sweetness and Power, *are taught by them to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.*

Some Persons seem unwilling that these Doctrines should be preached, at least they don't approve of their being much insisted on. They will do well to consider, whether Heaven is likely to be an agreeable Place to them, or no: For there the Grace of God and the Glory of Christ are the *principal Subjects* the Minds of Men will be entertained withal unto Eternity: And, therefore, those, who don't now like to hear much said of there glorious Subjects, give but small Evidence of a Meetness for the heavenly State. Some, it may be, will say to you, it is most profitable to treat on practical Subjects chiefly, and to shew the Necessity of Holiness. This you ought by no Means to neglect; but, if you recommend the Practice of Duty upon an *evangelical Foundation*, and clearly shew what *true Holiness* is, and how it differs from *mere Morality*, I am greatly mistaken, if your Discourses of that Kind will meet with a *more cool Reception* from any, than from such sort of Persons.

Consider, my beloved Brother, you are shortly to appear before *the Judgment-Seat of Christ*: Let me, therefore, intreat you closely to examine what Doctrine God hath revealed, and preach it, yea preach

it boldly, *whether Men will hear, or whether they will forbear*. If you do not, how will you be able to look our dear Lord Jesus in the Face?

**Secondly.** *Be instant in Season, out of Season.* You must abide and continue in this Labour, although you may meet with many Difficulties, Discouragements, and much Opposition in it: You must not think of quitting this Service, either on account of Reproaches cast on you by Enemies, or because you may be neglected by Friends. None of these Things should move you. Nor must you ever propose to disengage yourself from this Work by Views of secular Advantage, what Offers of that Kind soever may at any Time present. You ought to be diligent in this Service, and endeavour to be ready for it, at all Opportunities, and on all Occasions: *In Season*, i.e. on the Lord's Days, which are stated Times for the Worship of God, and the Instruction and Edification of the Church: *Out of Season*, that is to say, you must labour to prepare for, and be willing to exercise your ministerial Talents, as often as the Church shall require you, whose Servant you are. If they have an Ear to hear, it will be your Duty to speak to them of the Things of God, as well out of as in Season: For the Gift of Preaching is bestowed upon you for their Sakes, and they have a Right to expect you to exercise it on every suitable Occasion, and you stand obliged to comply with their Desire in this Matter, as far as you are able.

**Thirdly.** *Reprove.* Two Things are signified by this Word, (ελεγχω), viz. to convince by Reasoning, and to give Reproof.

You are *set for the Defence of the Gospel*, and it is your Business to vindicate the Truth of it, *by just and solid Reasoning*, in order to the Conviction of the Opposers of it. And herein it will be proper to proceed after this Manner.

**1.** Endeavour clearly to prove one Principle, which makes way for and leads on unto other Principles, and from which they follow. This Method is observed punctually by the Apostle *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans*. That Epistle is *argumentative*, and the Reasoning in it is clear, regular, and nervous.

**2.** You must shew how those Principles, which you design to establish, result from or follow upon that Doctrine; whereof evident Proof is already given.

**3.** It will be expected of you to answer Objections. In doing which you must observe what *Fallacy* is in them, and labour to make that plain, which will be a sufficient Refutation of them. And, if there is no Fallacy in them, then your Business will be to shew, that in Fact

they are no Objections to that Truth, which you are engaged in the Vindication of, but consistent with it.

**4.** Let your Proofs of a Doctrine be clear Testimonies of Scripture. By which I do not mean, that the Proposition you intend to prove, must be in so many and in such a Form of Words found in the Scripture; but that the sense of that Proposition is agreeable to the Word of God. Give me leave to instance in two or three Things. And, *1st*, God is one and three, one essentially, and three personally. *2dly*, We are justified by the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us. *3dly*, The Persons of the Elect were always accepted with God in Christ their Head. Neither of these is syllabically found in Scripture; but the Sense of each is plainly scriptural. Some who allow the two former dispute the Truth of the third, and object to it, because it is not syllabically contained in Scripture with just the same Propriety, and no more, as the *Anti-trinitarians* object to the Doctrine of the Trinity, because in Terms that Doctrine is not express'd in Scripture. This Method of arguing, how much soever it may be agreeable to some People, is *very weak*, and concludes *nothing at all*. For it is Thought, that is to be proved from Scripture; and, unto the Confirmation of that, it is not necessary that the Terms, wherein it is express'd, should be there found. Again, you must reprove the Haughtiness, disingenuity, and Impertinence of the Enemies of the Gospel. Many such there are; and that Contempt and Reproach, which they frequently cast on sacred Truth, call for *severe Reproof*.

**Fourthly. Rebuke.** This is a Part of our Work which it is necessary for us to attend unto, though to ourselves it is not so pleasing as some other Parts of it. My Brother, decline not to preach the Law, to open and explain it, deliver the whole Doctrine of it. Shew what it commands of Men, of all Men. Set before your Hearers that Misery which it threatens for a Violation of its Precepts: And shew the Equity and Justice of that Constitution. Never be afraid of being accounted and called by some, in a way of Reproach, for that Reason, a *legal* Preacher. *He who preaches the Gospel, also ought to preach the Law*. Follow you the Example of your *great Master* in this Matter, who explained the Law, and vindicated it from the *false* Glosses put upon it by the *Jews*, in his excellent Sermon *on the Mount*. Imitate the Apostle *Paul*, who in his *Epistles* delivers the Matter of the Law, as well as the glorious Truths of the Gospel; and proves the Equity and Justice of that Constitution, according to which all Men are obnoxious to eternal Death and Misery for having acted contrary to it. You must not consult the *Taste* and *Choice* of Men. Many, who are in the most deplorable Condition, love to have *smooth Things* declared unto them, and to have *Pillows* placed under their Armholes, wherein you can't gratify them, but at your own

*Peril.* You must endeavour to be a *Boanerges, a Son of Thunder*, to Sinners of all Sorts.

The Manner of the Spirit's Work on the Hearts of Men, if you attend unto it, will happily guide you to fulfil this Part of your Charge. He directs the Arrows of the Law into the Heart of a poor Sinner, and then applies the precious *Balm* of the Covenant to heal the Wounds he has given. Besides it is proper to acquaint Believers, as much as in you lies, with the Nature of the Covenant of Works, and with their Misery, according to that legal Constitution, in order to excite in them Gratitude and Praise to God, for that great Salvation, which they obtain thro' *Jesus Christ*. It will be of Service to the Heirs of Heaven to be well informed of Hell, and of the Nature of *infernal* Misery, unto which their numerous Sins, and the Corruption of their Hearts, so justly rendered them obnoxious. Farther, it wilt be your Business to rebuke the *Remiss, Negligent, and Scandalous*. And also you may find it necessary sometimes to rebuke sharply erring Persons, *that they may be found in the Faith.*

**Fifthly.** *Exhort.* The Word signifies to comfort, as well as exhort, (*παρακαλεω.*)

**1st.** You must comfort *the Mourners in Zion*, by proposing to their Consideration the sweet Promises and precious Truths of the Gospel. Many under a spiritual Conviction of their Sin and Danger are afraid, that their Salvation is impossible. Shew such, that *all Things are possible with God:* That the Salvation of Sinners, even of *the Chief* of Sinners, is not contrary to his Nature: That it is not contrary to his Will, nor at all inconsistent with his Law and Justice, on the Foundation of Christ's Obedience and Sacrifice: That, therefore, they have no Reason to conclude, that their Salvation is an impossible Thing, tho' their Guilt is great, and their Corruptions *strong and raging*. Again, you must comfort the Tempted. Shew such, how the People of God have been tempted, and those Effects which Temptations have sometimes produced in them: And that *no Temptation shall overtake them, but what is common to Men:* That *God will find a Way for their Escape, that they may be able to bear it:* That no Danger attends their Temptation, so long as they consider and oppose it as such: And that the prevalent Intercession of Christ will secure their Faith in the greater *Winnowings* they may meet with from Satan, the Enemy of their Souls. *I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not.*

Farther, you must comfort the Afflicted. *Affliction is not joyous, but grievous, tho' it yields the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness,* to the Saints under a divine Blessing. Believers are sometimes *weary and ready to faint in their Minds, when pressing Difficulties and Trials*

are upon them: And, therefore, they have Need of a reviving Cordial to cheer their *drooping Spirits*. Shew them in this Circumstance, that *many are the Afflictions of the Righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all*: That they are Fruits of paternal Love, and not Effects of vindictive Wrath: That they are intended for their Advantage, and shall certainly terminate in their Good: For *all Things work together for Good to them who love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose*.

Moreover, you must comfort such as are in Distress, under Darkness and Desertion. Shew them, that the *Children of Light, sometimes walk in Darkness*, and have *no Light* of Comfort and Joy, for a Season: And that, therefore, it is no other than a Temptation to think, that, because at present they enjoy not the *Light of God's Countenance*, they are not the Objects of his Love. Encourage them to wait for the Lord, yea to wait *patiently* for him. Shew them, that the Lord *rests in Love*: And that, tho' his Dispensations towards them vary, no Change occurs to his Affection unto their Persons.

I add, you must endeavour to comfort the Saints, who mourn under the heavy Weight of the Body of Sin. Sometimes they are tempted to think, that *their Spot is not the Spot of God's Children*, upon a View of the *Plague of their Hearts*: That surely there can't be *true Grace*, where there is so *much Corruption*. Shew such, that it is proper to a Principle of Grace to *discern the evil Nature of Sin, to loath and oppose it, as Sin*. And, that where Sin, as Sin, is opposed, and its Destruction desired and fought after, there it hath lost its Dominion, tho' it *swells, rages, and ever so violently exerts itself*: That tho' their Conflicts with their Lusts may *be sharp*, their Victory is *sure* in the End. Let them but continue fighting, and they will certainly be Conquerors.

Once more, you must endeavour to comfort convinced, mourning Backsliders. Encourage and promote in them Sorrow for their Miscarriages; but labour to confirm their Faith, and renew their Joy, with all *Meekness* and Compassion to their distressed Souls, *considering yourself, left you also be tempted*. This is a very necessary Consideration for us all. Let the *best Man in the World be but tempted, and left to himself, and he will fall an easy Prey to the Temptation, be it what it will*.

But permit me to observe to you, that it will not always be safe for you to attend to this Part of your Charge, *merely in a Common-Place Way*: You must carefully consider and observe the Nature of that Trouble which Men are under; whether it is *spiritual, or legal only*; whether it springs from a pressing Sense of Guilt and of its Demerit only, or whether it arises from a *spiritual Principle in the Mind*. If it

doth, it will be attended with an Hatred of Sin in itself, and a strong Desire of Freedom from the Prevalence, Power, and Being of it. Where you cannot discover some genuine Actings of this Principle, you must not apply those excellent Rules, which are prescribed in *casuistical* Writings, for comforting afflicted Consciences, for, if you do, you will not profit; but it may greatly prejudice the Souls of Men, and occasion them to think, that their Case is fare, when in Fact it is not so. And, on the other Hand, you must be very *cautious*, that you use no spiritually-mourning Soul with *Severity, Slight, and Neglect*; if you should, you will *make the Hearts of such sad, whom the Lord would not have made sad*. If you would be *as God's Mouth*, you must separate the Precious from the Vile. This Part of your Work is attended with great Difficulty, and *much Skill* is required unto a proper Discharge of it. By a diligent Study of the Word of God, and a strict Observation of your own Heart, in Seasons of Temptation, Affliction, Trouble, and Darkness, you will be best qualified for comforting *Zion's Mourners*.

The *Book of Psalms* is a rich Treasury of spiritual Experience; and, therefore, I would advise you to study that Book closely. From thence you may learn, what Temptations, Troubles, and Distresses, sometimes attend the Saints; what Vicissitudes they pass under; what is the Matter of their Support; how they are relieved, encouraged, delivered, and filled with triumphant Joy, in the Issue. And, therefore, hereby you will become capable of administering Comfort to such as have a clear Title to Gospel- Encouragement, but, thro' a Variety of Causes, are most backward in receiving it. The Care of such will require your greatest Tenderness, and the Exercise of your utmost Skill, as a *Son of Consolation*, to give them Relief under their Distress.

**2dly.** You must *exhort*. Men in general you must exhort to shun the Practice of Sin, and to avoid all Occasions of it: And put them on the Practice of Duty. Exhort them to read the Scripture; and exhort them to Prayer, which is a Part of natural Religion, and a Duty incumbent on all Men. Exhort them to hear the Word of God preached; this is also their Duty: For the Gospel justly demands the Attention of every Man, how much soever it is neglected and despised by the Generality of Mankind thro' the Blindness and Prejudice of their Minds. Again, you must exhort the Saints to decline every evil Way and Work; to practice every Duty in every Relation and Capacity, Providence places them in. Be sure that you do this in an *evangelical* Manner. Never content yourself, with Discourses of *bare Morality*. But shew from what Principle good Works spring: That they flow from Love, are performed in Faith: And that the Motives to them are God's Purposes of Mercy, the Acts of his

Goodness; the Benefits which flow from that Origin, thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ. You must shew for what Ends Duty is to be attended unto upon the Gospel-Plan: Not in order to Justification before God, and with a View to obtain Life by that; but for the Glory of God, and to shew our Gratitude to him for his Kindness to us, to manifest our Approbation of Holiness, and Abhorrence of Sin, and our willing Subjection to his Authority, and for the Honour and Credit of his Gospel, which is the Source of our Comfort, and the Foundation of all our Hopes of Salvation and Happiness.

Never be moved from this Part of your Charge by the Cavils of those, (should you meet with such) who have no Relish for any Thing but Doctrines. See to it, that you take the Apostle's Advice, and obey his Injunction, in this Matter. *These Things I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works, for these Things are good and profitable to Men;* tho' some may put you upon neglecting one Part of this Advice, and others oppose you in attending to the other Part of it.

And observe, that you must do this *with Long-Suffering and Doctrine*: That is to say, with *Gentleness, Meekness and Patience*. Moroseness becomes not a Minister of the *Gospel of Peace*, and an Ambassador of the *meek* and lowly Jesus. Not but that you may meet with some, whom you must *rebuke sharply*. If you engage in the Defence of Truth against a *sneering, insulting, and impertinent* Caviller, you will not lay yourself open to *just Censure*, if you treat his Manner of objecting with *Spirit and Smartness*, and call it by the Name it deserves, *viz. Impertinence*. Besides, you must do this with *Doctrine, i.e.* with Instruction in the glorious and important Truths of the Gospel. Hence you will see, that *close Study, indefatigable Labour, and a diligent Observation of your own Heart*, are necessary. What a Compass of Knowledge? What a Treasure of Experience? What Acquaintance with yourself? What an Understanding of the Nature of the *Devices of Satan*, and of the *serpentine Windings of the old Man*, are needful? And, in the Defence of the Gospel, what Ability of Discerning and Ripeners of Judgment are required, in order to shew the Weakness, Impertinence, and Fallacy of Objections against divine Truths?

Thus, my dear Brother, agreeably to your own Desire, I have let before you your Duty in a faithful Manner, according to that Light in and Apprehension which I have thereof. On the Consideration of these Heads of Advice, I am persuaded that you will say, *Who is sufficient for these Things?* But be not discouraged, neither at the Difficulties of the Work itself, nor the Opposition which you may meet with in it.

*Endure Hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ.* May the Lord, who hath called you to this Service in his Church, assist you *to fight the good Fight, to keep the Faith!* And, when (after Usefulness for many Years) you shall *have finished your Course*, may you clearly see, that you *shall receive a Crown of Righteousness, which God will give, not to you only, but unto all them who love his Appearing,* not as a *Reward of Debt*, but of *sovereign Grace!* Amen.

## FOOTNOTES

The attentive Reader, I think, must discern, that the Apostle enjoins on *Titus* Preaching the several Doctrines, whereof some Hints have been before given; and, therefore, it certainly is the Duty of a Christian Minister to explain and inculcate those Principles, however unsuitable they may be unto the Taste of some Hearers. No Reasons, which by many are esteemed *prudentia*, will be a sufficient Plea to justify him in a Neglect thereof. And evident it is, that those Truths, in their own Nature, are calculated to promote Holiness in all, who understand and relish the *Things themselves*. The Doctrines of the *true Grace* of God have no *licentious* Tendency. Some Persons abusing those important Principles is no Objection to the Truths themselves, nor is it a *justifiable* Reason for a Minister's *Silence* about them, or *a slight and superficial Manner* of treating on them: They are what he *ought to affirm constantly*. And, in order to prevent an Abuse of those Doctrines, it is a Duty equally incumbent on him to shew, that these Doctrines of divine Grace do not lessen, much less dissolve, our Obligation to Obedience: And, consequently, one necessary Branch of his Work is, to treat on Practicals, and to shew that the Gospel hath no greater Adversaries than those are, who, under a Pretence of Value for its momentous Doctrines, and of Pleasure in hearing them preached, can't bear with Exhortations to practice Duty. These are some of the worst *Enemies of the Cross of Christ*, and justly deserve the *most severe Reproof*, let them be *who or what they may*. Doctrine are not to be neglected or curtailed under the specious Pretence of promoting *practical Religion*: Nor must we decline to treat of Duties, and our Obligation to Obedience, under *a like* Pretence of Esteem for the Doctrines of the Grace of God. Tho' *the Gospel delivers us from the Covenant of Works, it leaves us under it as a Law*. And, tho' Obedience is not required to the same Ends, yet still it is required, and it is to be enforced by *weightier Motives*, wherewith the evangelical Scheme furnishes us. Nor does that Preacher *make full Proof of his Ministry*, who neglects to practice either Part of this *apostolical Injunction*.

## SERMON 15

### SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CHOICE EXPERIENCE OF MRS. ANNE BRINE,

#### AS WRITTEN BY HERSELF, AND COLLECTED OUT OF HER LETTERS

PERCEIVING, that you are desirous to have an Account of the Dealings of God with my Soul, and being willing to gratify you therein; I shall give you a few short Hints thereof; Though the Badness of my Memory, and the Sense of Things being too much wore off, will not admit me to give a particular Relation, how I was carried on, Step by Step. When I was young, I was very much taken with. the Vanities and Follies of Youth. My greatest Concern was, that I was hindered by my Parents, of taking my full Swing, in that, in which, I so much delighted: For they would sometimes be talking to me about the State of my immortal Soul, and asking what I thought would become of me, if I should die without an Interest in Christ: But, I in disregardful Manner used to turn my Back upon them, and laugh at them; thinking myself as good as they, only I could not talk so finely about religious Matters, For, thought I, I am not guilty of any very heinous Sins, all that I desire, is only to play and be merry, as most of my Years are willing to do. What, thinks I, would they have me be mopish, and lay aside all Pleasure thus soon, it will be Time enough for me to betake myself to a melancholy Life when I attain to their Age; should I do it now, I shall be laughed at by all my Companions. I heartily wished, that my Parents were like the Parents of some of my Play-Fellows, that I might have the same Liberty, which they enjoyed. I accounted myself to be in a worse Case than any Body, because I was deprived in some measure of the Liberty, I would have had. When I was at the Meeting, my Thoughts were wholly employed about my vain Delights and Pleasures, instead of being attentive in hearing the Word of God preached. Sabbaths were very burdensome to me, and I did, as often as I could, make Excuses to stay at Home, under Pretence of Illness.

Thus I went on till I was near fifteen Years of Age, about which Time, it pleased God to awaken me, and bring me to consider, what a State I was in. One Night being in my usual manner, at Play with my Companions, and hearing them swear at a sad Rate, and taking the Lord's Name in vain, in almost every Sentence they spoke, having met with something that vexed them, which provoked them, as they said, so to do. This, I thought, was not right in them; though I myself had much ado to keep from bad Expressions, thinking I

looked foolish amongst them, because I did not do as they did: But I was kept from it, though the Temptation lay very hard upon me. This terrified me very much, not only for that, I was so much put to it, to keep from bad Words myself; but to think, that I should delight in such wicked Company, contrary to the Mind of my Parents, and certainly displeasing to God, against whom, thought I, I have sinned to a great Degree. I went home that Night with a sad and heavy Heart, concluding, that I should certainly be damned. And fully expected every Night when I went to Bed, for about a Fortnight, that I should never awake any more in this World, but should be in everlasting Punishment before Daylight appeared.

I resolved to amend my Life, and to pray to God for Forgiveness of past Sins. After this Resolution was taken, my Terror began to abate: And glad I was, thinking that God was pleased with me, but I soon began to break my Resolutions; for no sooner was the Terror I had felt, a little over, but I had a hankering Mind to return to former Pleasures. And *Satan* let in with this Temptation very strongly, that I was too young to mind Religion, and that if betook myself therefore to all Pleasure would be at an End with me. And likewise, these Thoughts were suggested to my Mind, that the Lord was merciful, and so if I did but repent, and pray earnestly to him to forgive my Sins, when I should be past taking Pleasure, in those Things, in which most of my Years delighted, I need not fear Acceptance with him.

After these Thoughts, with many others, which I cannot now remember, had passed through my Mind, I came to this Conclusion, to go amongst my old Companions once more; and accordingly, when Evening came, out I went to them. They seemed glad of my Company, and told me, they wondered at the Change they perceived in my Countenance towards them, and that they were afraid they had done, or said something displeasing to me, tho' they knew it not; but if it was so, they were very sorry, for they would not do any Thing to anger me if they could help it. This Speech of theirs knit my Love to them, and made me resolve not to forsake them again whatever came on it; but before the Night was spent, I was again seized with sad Terror of Conscience, so that I could not be brisk amongst my Companions.

I went home, and betook myself to my former Resolutions, not to offend God on this wise and that I would read and pray, in order to merit his Favour. For, thought I, I must not expect to find Mercy any other Way. With these Promises, I contented myself, in a great measure, tho' I was not able to perform them. For, no sooner than the pleasant Evenings drew my Companions together; but my Mind was with them, and I allowed myself to go one Night after another,

thinking every Time it should be the last, and I neglected Reading and Praying, with these Thoughts, I will omit but this Time, and go to my Play-fellows but once more.

Thus I went on for some Time; but could not take that Pleasure, in Vanity and Folly, as formerly I did. At last, it pleased the Lord, to work such strong Convictions in me, as I hope ended in saving Conversion.

One Day, these Thoughts darted into my Mind, that it was, as likely, I might die that Day, as live to another, and then what Good would all my Resolution to reform do me, since I was never found in the Practice of known Duties. These Thoughts set me all in a Tremble, and I concluded myself to be in a miserable Condition, for that I was *deeply* guilty of Sins of Omission and Commission, and that too, after I had been called to forsake them, and therefore, they could no longer be termed Sins of Ignorance. So I began to conclude the Day of Grace was now past, for I did not hearken to God's Voice when he called, and, therefore, he would now turn a deaf Ear unto me.

Then were my Sins, as it were, *set in Order before me*. Things that I had done in my Childhood, which had been long forgotten by me, came fresh to my Remembrance: Upon which, I thought, that I was undone to Eternity. At the same Time, I was made sensible of my Incapacity, to do any Thing that is good. I saw there was a Want of Power, as well as of Will, in me.

About this Time, my Father preached from those Words: *Nevertheless, the Foundation of God, standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth them, that are his, and let every one, that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity.* From these Words he took Occasion to talk of Election, and of God's Foreknowledge from Eternity. Well, thought I, is it so, that the Lord, did before this Choice, well know what Rebels we should prove, then I may be well assured, that I shall be damned, for he would not fix his Love unalterably upon so vile, so sinful a Creature, as I am. When my Father came to speak from the latter Part of the Text, he spoke how it was the Duty of Believers to be pressing after Holiness. This made me begin to think of working for Life again, though I doubt not, but my dear Father made a Distinction between working for Life and from Life; but so ignorant was I, that I could not take it in aright. So I attempted to pray, and in so doing, found something of a secret Hope, that the Lord would pardon my Sins, tho' they were very great, if I could but keep to this Duty: But the Lord did not suffer me long to rest here.

For that Scripture came into my Mind: *Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done; but of his Mercy hath he saved*

*us.* And these Words followed: *Not of Works, left any, Man should boast.* Now was I quite brought off from having any Dependence upon my own Doings, and was at once quite stript of all Hopes: For I thought these Words came only to convince me, that my Righteousness would avail me nothing in Point of Salvation: For it is not said, according to his Mercy hath he saved thee, but us, and, therefore, no Encouragement to me. Thus I went on for some Time in a distressed, disconsolate manner.

One Day, as I was going about some Business, that Word fell upon my Thoughts: *Thou art chosen of God and precious,* I was not for taking any Notice of them. They ran in my Mind very much all Day, at last, I began to wonder at the Reason of their following me so much. I chosen of God, and precious thought I, that can never be, the Words do not belong to me, I dare not take Comfort from them. However, I looked into a Concordance; but could find none nearer than those in 1 Peter 1:4. This concerned me very much, for now, I thought it was plain, that *Satan* was endeavouring to deceive me. I was in sad Distress, and knew not what to do: Look which Way I would, I could see nothing but Ruin and Destruction before my Eyes. Pray I durst not, that Word ran so in my Mind, *the Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination unto the Lord.*

At length *Satan* began to come in again with this Temptation; that I was but young, and, therefore, need not be thoughtful about Eternity; and that if I was elected I should be brought home at last, tho' I lived ever so carelessly the mean while; but if not, my Thoughtfulness would never save me. But it pleased the Lord to give me to see, that this was from the Devil, because it did not lead to Christ, but to Carelessness; and that Scripture came with some Power: *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near:* Whereupon, I desired, that I might so seek him as to find him, so call, that he might answer, so knock, that he might open unto me: For, I thought there was nothing in the World so desirable. That Word was given in for my Comfort: *Tho' your Sins be like Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; tho' they be red as Crimson, they shall be as Wool.*

I was then helped to admire at the distinguishing, unparalleled, superabounding Love of God. Oh! that he should come over all my Sins and Rebellions, and also manifest and discover it to me. Then I could cry out, *why me, why me,* indeed! Why should I, that am viler than the vilest Sinner that lives, be thus favoured, thus honoured! 'Tis Cause of Wonder and Astonishment! But, alas! this abode not long. I soon began to be under Fears and Questionings, whether ever the Lord had been at work upon my Soul, or not, and whether the Things I met with, might not be only Delusions. And, At length,

*Satan* came in with his Temptations and Assaults upon me, and tempted me to question the Being of a God, and of the Truth of the Scriptures: Many Thoughts I was distressed and perplexed with, which are not fit to be spoken, which brought me at last into such a Frame, that I knew not what to think of any Persons or Things. But one Day, as I was standing at the Garret Window, and looking out into the Garden, I began to consider how the Trees did grow; sure, thought I, it can be no natural Power that produced them: Then those Words came to my Mind, *lift up your Eyes on high, and behold who hath created these Things;* from which I was made to believe, that there is a God: And those Words followed; *hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the Ends of the Earth?* Then was I strongly persuaded, that there is an all-seeing, an all-knowing God, and wonder-working God, who is infinite in Power.

But now the Thoughts and Conceptions which I before had, were like Arrows piercing me: For now I concluded, that if there was a God, I could have no Hopes of ever finding any Favour or Mercy from him; for I had found myself out of Hopes, by questioning his Being. Nay, I thought, that I had committed the unpardonable Sin, and, therefore, I could not be saved.

In this Distress I continued some Hours, ‘till it pleased the Lord to come in with these Words; *Is my Arm shortened at all, that I cannot save? Or have I no Power to redeem?* Which for the present a little supported me, for I was persuaded, that his Power is not limited, but that he could fare the *worst* of Sinners. But then I began to doubt of his Willingness to save me.

I was by this Trial made more sensible of the Wickedness of my Heart, and of the natural Propensity that is in me to commit Evil, than ever before I was. It was a Means of discovering to me the Sin and Corruption that dwells within me. I then saw myself to be nothing but a *Mass* of Sin, and *Heap* of Uncleanness. I saw myself to be full of Ignorance and Darkness, which made me question the more, whether there was any Thing of a Work of Grace upon me or no: For I thought if I have Grace, why do I not grow; I find myself ignorant, and that is a Sign that I have no Grace.

I used often to wish that I had died in my Infancy, and then I should not have committed so many, and so heinous Sins against my dear Lord; tho’ I was sensible, that if I had died when but one Day old, and had not the Application of Christ’s Righteousness, I had even then been miserable; for I was convinced of original Sin before this Time, from those Words, *I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me:* Tho’ it was a strange Doctrine to me at first;

but after a strict Enquiry, I found by the Scripture, the first Sin which caused the Fall, was Pride and Unbelief. It was Pride in that, Man aimed to be *as God, knowing Good and Evil*; and Unbelief appeared in that he hearkened unto the Voice of *Satan*, and did not obey God: And upon a little Search, I found that these Sins were very predominant in my Nature. By which I found, that I was tainted with original Contamination. Those Words likewise were often in my Thoughts; *who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? Not one.* By these, I was convinced of original Sin, and was made to see, that from thence all actual Sins did flow.

But to return. After some Time, the Lord was pleased to break in with Discoveries of Love to my Soul afresh, with these Words, *As the Father hath loved me; so have I loved you, continue ye in my Love.* This was a sweet Cordial indeed, to my drooping Spirits. And soon after these Words were made very sweet to my Soul: *As the Bridegroom rejoiceth over his Bride; so shall thy God rejoice over thee.* Oh! how did I then admire the

distinguishing Grace of God, that was thus largely displayed and revealed to vile, sinful, and unworthy me. Then was my Heart knit and united to the Lord Jesus; so that I could say, *whom have I in Heaven, but thee? And there is none in the Earth, that I desire besides thee.*

I then counted all earthly Things, but as *empty Vanities*, in Comparison with that Comfort I had in the Enjoyment of the Presence of my dear Lord. Then could I freely commit myself, my all into his Hand, believing him to be my Head, my Husband, my Saviour, my Redeemer, and my Advocate.

I was for some Time wholly taken up in the Contemplation of the divine Perfections of him, *who is fairer than the Children of Men:* And in adoring the Love of the divine Persons in the glorious Trinity. I saw that the Love of the Father was great, in making Choice of such a rebellious Creature, as he well knew I should prove. The Love of the Son was no less, in accepting of us at his Father's Hand, freely, willingly, and voluntarily undertaking to satisfy divine Justice, and to answer all the Demands of the Law. The Love of the Spirit may be seen, in discovering this, so matchless and marvellous Love and Grace unto us.

Now, I thought, I could be content to be any Thing, or nothing; so that God might be glorified in me. I was fearful of acting, or speaking any Thing, that was in the least contrary to the Mind of my God. I then hated every Thing that looked like Lightness, or was an the leastwise sinful, and was as much afraid of sinning, as knowing

it was offensive to the holy and pure Nature of Deity, as of being damned for it. And desired as much to be holy here, as happy hereafter.

Then Sabbaths were a Delight instead of Burdens. For as soon as the Sabbath was ended, I longed for the Return of another. Then were God's Ways, *Ways of pleasantness, and all his Paths, were Paths of Peace* unto me. Those Words were pleasant to me: *Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name: And thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel; the God of the whole Earth shall be he called.* Many other sweet and precious Promises were made very comfortable to my Soul, which I need not mention here.

I was for a considerable Time, at it were dandled on the Knee of Love. I seldom was a Day without fresh and repeated Discoveries of pardoning Love and Grace; which so melted my Heart, and so raised my Affections, that at some Times I was in such Transports of Joy, as cannot be expressed. I was so settled in the Belief and Persuasion of my Instatement in an everlasting inviolable Covenant, that I thought with *David, my Mountain stood so strong, it could never be moved.* I was ready to say with *Paul*; nothing shall separate me from the Love of God, nor interpose, nor hinder my Enjoyment. I could then go to God in Duties, as to my own God and Father, and claim a Right to, and Propriety in the Promises of the Gospel.

At that Time, I had an earnest Desire after the Welfare of those, who had formerly been my Companions: I mean the Welfare of their immortal Souls. O! thought I, did they but know what I feel, and could they but conceive what Satisfaction, Comfort, and Joy, there is in the Enjoyment of, Nearness to, and Communion with a reconciled God, and, did they but see what a Beauty, Loveliness, and Glory there is in him, they would freely forsake all their foolish Pleasures, and vain Delights for an Interest in Christ. I thought I would not have returned back to my former Course of Sin and Vanity, might I thereby gain a thousand Worlds. For there is more true Peace, and solid Comfort, in one Moment's Communion with God, than in an hundred Years, in Sin and Folly. Some Time after this, the Lord was pleased to withdraw *the Light of his Countenance*, and to leave me in the Dark: Whereupon, I presently began to question my Interest in him, and to fear, that what I felt, was only a Delusion from *Satan*, or else the Fancy of a distressed Mind, or some Notion, that I had got, by giving more Attention in Hearing the Word preached, than I was wont to do.

About the same Time I heard, that one of my Companions should say, that it was only Pride, that made me forsake them, that I did not think them rich enough to play with me, and so they reflected upon

me very much. The Parents of this Girl were Professors, and they spoke as bad of me, as the Girl herself could do. This troubled me greatly, for now I thought the Lord was about to discover what I was, and that I certainly was, as they said; tho' my Heart was so deceitful, that I did not discern it before: Or else he would not have suffered his own Children to have had such Thoughts of me.

In this Distress, I remained some considerable Time: One Day, I happened to fall into the Company of this Girl, and one, who was a Friend to me being present, she began to tell me what the other had said of me. The Girl at first denied it: Upon that, I talked to her pretty sharply, for telling of Lyes to excuse herself, then she owned, that she had said so, to one, or two, and what then? Its true, said she. I told her, that I thought I might truly, say, it was false. Then those Words were given in: *If ye were of the World, the World would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the World, therefore, the World hateth you.* But thought I, it is not only the World, but Professors likewise, who cast these Reflections upon me. Then those Words came to my Mind: *In the World, ye shall have Tribulation; but in me, ye shall have Peace: Be of good Cheer, for I have overcome the World.* Then I considered, that it is not said, from the World, or from the Persons of the World, but in the World; and inferred from thence, that Persons may meet with Trouble, and Trials, even from the Men of their own House. Then was I helped from these Promises, to admire Grace, that the Lord should so condescend to such a poor unbelieving Creature as I.

Soon after this, I began to examine myself, whether, or no, I could freely, and willingly part with all Creature-Comforts for the Sake of Christ: Or whether, if I was put to my Choice, either to have great Things in the World, and all the Pleasure, that Heart could wish, or to have Christ and the Cross, which of the two, I should chuse? I thought my Heart replied, I should rather chuse Christ and the Cross, than all the Riches and Pleasures of this World. But I again reflected, that my Heart was deceitful, and it might be, if I was put to the Trial, and should have Riches, Honours, and Pleasures set before me, I should chuse them, rather than Christ with the Cross, and so this could be no Evidence of my being right.

Whereupon I was greatly troubled, and desired of the Lord, that if I was his, he would by a more than ordinary Power let me know it. Then was I for chalking out a Way for God to walk in. Thinking, that if this, and the other Thing might be according to my Wish, then I could believe. After this Desire had passed, I began to be much troubled to think what I was now about. Must I direct the Almighty? Could not I take him at his Word, without desiring he should take such a Way to raise up my Faith. Yet for all this I could not help still

having the same Desire, till those Words were brought to my Mind: *My Ways are not as your Ways, nor my Thoughts, as your Thoughts: For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts, than your Thoughts.* Soon after this, those Words were impressed upon my Thoughts: *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the Right Hand of Righteousness.* It was a good Word indeed to my Soul, for many Days. About this Time, my Father was preaching from these Words: *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.* My Memory is too bad to give any particular Account of what was then delivered. But this I can remember, that I had sweet Times under hearing.

One Sabbath-Day in the Morning I was very ill, so that I was forced to stay at Home. But no sooner was the Family gone to the Meeting; but I began to reflect upon myself, for letting a little Illness detain me from going. If I had a right Value for Hearing the Gospel of Christ, thought I, I should have gone: Or had I any right Esteem for the Comfort, and Refreshment of my Soul, I should readily, have gone, that I might have met with it; but now I thought it was plain, that I was nothing but a painted Hypocrite. I had at that Time such a Sight of the Darkness of my Understanding, the Hardness of my Heart, and of the Perverseness of my Will, that I thought there were none like me. For thinks I, such as are indeed Christians, take more Delight in the Means of Grace, and in discoursing of the Things of God. They can speak of a new Birth, and of Faith in Christ, and this I thought myself a Stranger to. So, I then judged, there was nothing right in me: But if there is not yet, it is high Time there should, thought I; and I am well assured, that if I return back to my former Course of Sin and Folly, I shall perish. If I have any Dependence on any Thing in myself, that is too short: There is no other Way, whereby we can be saved, but in, and thro' Christ, thro' his Righteousness alone, without any of our own to be joined therewith: Therefore, I will now, as helped, venture my Soul upon him, *if I perish, I perish.*

Then that Word was given in to me with an irresistible Power, so that I could not withstand it: *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy, Transgressions, for my own Sake, and I will not remember thy Sins.* Then was I again helped to admire the free, rich, and distinguishing Love of God: That he of his good Will and Pleasure. and for his own Sake, not far any Worth, or Worthiness in me; no, for I deserve *not the least of his Mercies*, should thus freely pardon the *most vile* of Sinners.

Then I desired, that since Grace is thus free, I might never be suffered to do any Thing to offend, so kind, so merciful a God: For, thought I, is it so, that Grace, Love, and Mercy, is so abundant, and super-abounding, then am I under the highest Obligation in the World, to be found in Acts of Obedience to all God's Commands, so far, as capable, not for Life, but from Life: Not expecting to merit Salvation; but being chosen of God, redeemed by Christ from the Curse of the Law, he having answered all the Demands thereof, and given a full and plenary Satisfaction to divine Justice on my Account therefore, I ought to endeavour to promote his Honour and Glory, in all Holiness, and godly Conversation.

I had at that Time a deep Sense of the *odious* Nature of Sin, that it was of so *heinous* a Nature, that nothing less than the Blood of the spotless righteous Lamb of God could satisfy for it. That the Son of God must: take upon him our Nature, stand in our Room and Stead, *be made Sin for us, who himself knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* O Matchless Grace, unparalleled Love, that ever the *Lord of Life and Glory*, should leave his Father's Bosom, to die so shameful, so ignominious a Death, even the Death of the Cross, for poor rebellious Creatures, and that he should endure such Sufferings, and undergo his Father's Wrath and Displeasure, to that Degree, that he cried out: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* And all this for, and on Account of poor sinful Mankind. The Consideration of this, made me abhor Sin, and loath myself on Account of my Transgressions, I desired, that I might never be suffered to sin against God, in Heart, Lip, nor Life. Nay, I thought, that if I was sure to be damned, yet I desired, that whilst I remained here, I might live to the Praise and Glory of God.

I had a comfortable Time all that Week, and the Week following. Many sweet, and precious Promises were given in, which I cannot now remember: So that I was filled with such Transportations of Joy, as I cannot express, nor could I willingly admit of any Discourse, or Company, that might interrupt my Enjoyments.

And to the End, that nothing of that might hinder my Meditations, I commonly sat in my Lodging Room, where I enjoyed many pleasant Hours, as well as some distressing ones.

I had now an endeared Love for any, that I hoped were the Children of God. And, if I heard of any young ones, being under Convictions, I soon found my Affections strongly engaged to them, who before I had no Esteem of, and an earnest Desire after their Welfare.

After this, hearing some, in telling their Experience, speak of the dreadful Temptations they had met with, and also reading Mr. Barry's Account of the Dealings of God with him, what sharp

Conflicts he met with, and how long he was under *the Spirit of Bondage*, and upon his receiving *the Spirit of Adoption*, what glorious Effects ensued; I began to fear again, that I was not in a converted State. For, I thought, I was never loaded with the Guilt of Sin, as some be: Neither was I ever assaulted with such dreadful Temptations from *Satan*, as many are; nor yet have I ever enjoyed such wonderful and glorious Revelations of Christ, as some express, therefore, I fear that I am still *in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity*.

My Trouble thro' these Fears, increased daily for some Time. Whereupon, I acquainted one of my intimate Friends therewith: Who directed me to a Passage in Mr. Bunyan's *Come and Welcome to the Chief of Sinners*, which just answered those very Objections. The reading whereof little removed my Doubts. And also reading Mr. Barry's *Postscript*, to caution such doubting tempted Believers, that might be ready to draw sad Conclusions against themselves, from hearing of the wonderful Dealings of God with him, in handling him so sharply by *the Spirit of Bondage*; as also his bountiful Dealing with him, in making his Soul the Receptacle of such Joy and Consolation, upon believing. Saith he, *Some pass thro' greater Horror, and are brought, as it were, to the Gates of Hell, and Desperation, as I was: Others are dealt more easily, and gently with, being sweetly allured, and as it were insensibly transplanted into Christ, they not well knowing what is done to them.* The reading of these Things, I say, together with those Words, following of me very much: *He leadeth thee by the still Waters*, did give me some Hopes, that I was one of those, that the Lord was pleased thus by the gentle Drawings of his Spirit to bring to close with Christ. Then those Words were very pleasant to me: *I taught Ephraim to go, leading them by the Hand; but they, knew not, that I healed them. I drew them with the Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love. I was to them, as they that take off the Yoke on their Jaws, and laid Meat unto them.* Then was I helped to see, that tho' I had not been so strongly beset with Temptations as some are, yet that was not an Indication, that the Work of Grace was not right, in, and upon me; for the Lord can work in what way he pleases. And surely, I have great Cause of Thankfulness, on this very Account, that I was not left to the Buffetings of *Satan*, nor to be so long under that sad Horror and Bondage of Conscience, as some be, and tho' I had not such great Revelations of Christ, nor such ravishing Joy and Comfort as some have; yet I had such Views of him, as a suitable, and sufficient Saviour, that I would not part with my Hopes of an Interest in him, for the World: And also had received such Joy and Comfort from him, as did far surpass all the Comfort, that can flow from the belt, and greater Enjoyments of this World's Things: Yea, for one

Moment's Communion with God, is far preferable to all the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this World; for it yields more Satisfaction, and Peace, than can be met with in the highest Station of worldly Grandeur.

Thus was I helped to meditate on these Things, and to stand and admire, that I should be so highly favoured, as to have any Discovery of pardoning Grace, any Manifestation of redeeming Love. It had been a great Mercy, if the Lord had fixed his Love upon me, and had not made it known to me: But O it is matchless and unparalleled Grace indeed, that he should send his Spirit to reveal this his altogether unmerited, and inconceivable Love to my Soul! I can never enough admire this great, this inexpressible Love. Neither am I able — Something is here wanting, by Injury her Writing hath suffered, thro' one means or other. She proceeds thus.

Then was the Language of my Heart, O that I might never commit one Sin more! How can I bear to think of offending so kind, so loving a God. What Sin against such Love and Mercy, that hath been discovered to sinful unworthy me? How can I bear it Wretch that I am, are there yet the Remainders of Sin in me; I hate it, I loath it. O! that I might be wholly and entirely freed therefrom. This, I say, was the constant Language of my Heart for some Time.

Unwilling was I, as I have before said, to leave my Lodging Room, so much as to eat a little Victuals, for fear of having my Thoughts diverted from Things that are heavenly and divine.

And, when I was in Company, I was restless till I got by myself again. One Time I well remember, having been in Company, when I got to my Chamber again, I was thinking over something that passed, till on a sudden, those Words came with such Power: *My Son, give me thy Heart*; I answered, Lord, do thou take it, thou alone art worthy — here also some Injury hath happened to her Lines.

I admired, that the eternally glorious God should stoop so low, as to desire a Place, in the Hearts of such poor, Nothing-Creatures, as we are, who is glorified and adored above, by the blessed Angel, and hath no need of the Adoration, and Services of such *poor Dust and Ashes* as we are. O wonderful and matchless Grace!

I had that Afternoon, such Views of the Glories of Heaven, of the Bliss and Happiness, that the Angels, and glorified. Saints are possessed of, that made me even long to be *dissolved, to be with Christ, which is far better*. Some little Time after this, one Sabbath-Day, as I was going to the Meeting, this Thought darted into my Mind, that I was all this while, but a deceiving myself, and building my Hopes on a sandy Foundation, and not on Christ, who is the only

Way of Salvation. This Thought set me on a Tremble, and sad Distress was I in, till those Words came in: *I will deliver thee from going down to the Pit, for I have found a Ransom*, which a little supported me, tho' I could not tell whether there was a Scripture, or not; but when I came home, I looked into a *Concordance*, and found it. In the Afternoon, when I was in the Meeting, my Fear seized me again that all I had met with, was only a Delusion, that *Satan* was endeavouring to deceive me, and so took this Method, which he thought was the likeliest to keep me quiet, persuading me, that I was in a safe State; when alas! it was no such Thing. I thought he could *transform himself into an Angel of Light*, and can bring Scriptures, to those that he brought to trust in, and depend on something short of Christ. This I fully thought was nay Case, for about Half an Hour; then those Words were brought to my Mind: *I am not a Man, that I should lye, nor the Son of Man, that I should repent.*

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Here the Narrative she gives is broke off, and left unfinished. I shall present the Reader with some farther Account of her Experience, and of the carrying on of the good Work upon her soul, out of some of her Letters, which she wrote to Relations, Friends, and Acquaintance.

I shall begin this Account with some Lines taken out of a Letter to her Mother, whom she much honoured and tenderly loved. She writes thus:

*Dear Mother,*

I AM very glad to hear of your being in such a comfortable Frame, whilst under your late Affliction. The Presence of God is very comfortable and delightful at all Times; but in a special Manner in a Time of Affliction; it makes Affliction seem very light and easy. Thro' Grace I know something of it. I also know something how dismal and distressing it is to be on a sick Bed; and to my own Apprehension, to be ear the Time of Dissolution, and to be wholly deprived of his comforting Presence, to have not one Glimpse of Love, no sealing Evidence of an Interest in his Favour; but quite on the contrary, writing the most bitter Things against myself: Lying for some Time under the dreadful Apprehensions of approaching Wrath and endless Misery. This is a very sad Case; but as I before hinted, this is not always, nor indeed not often mine; but it has been the Pleasure of my dear Lord, most Times, when attended with bodily Illness, to favour me with Visits of Love, to give me repeated Discoveries of my Interest in him, and to let me see, that it is *in very Faithfulness*, that he afflicts, that it is for my *real* Good and Advantage; tho' I at present may not discern how, or which Way. For

*what he doth, we know not now; but we shall know hereafter.* I have been filled with Admiration and Astonishment, that my Afflictions are not the Rebukes of an *angry* God; but his fatherly Chastisements for my Profit, that they come not in vindictive Wrath; but are as the Rod in the Hand of a loving and tender-hearted Father. That he will lay no more upon me, than he will enable me to bear. That they are Part of my Portion: Yea, that they are really Part of the Blessing designed for me in the eternal Covenant. That they are mine, in the Sense the *Apostle* speaks of, when he enumerates the many Benefits that are the Saints' Property: *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Things present, or Things to come, or Life, or Death all are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ, is God's.* But I must conclude for Want of Time, etc.



To the same she thus expresses herself on a very mournful Occasion, *viz.* the Death of an only Child, who was not five Years old.

*Dear Mother,*

YOU desire to know how we are in our Minds. Indeed I have often thought to write to you on that Subject; but it being a *melancholy* one, I omitted it: Tho' I may say, that for my own Part, I am mostly better reconciled to that *mournful* Providence, than I could have expected. Not that my *dear Babe* is much out of my Mind, for that she is not, Day, or Night; but at some Times I am pretty much resigned to the Will of God, in what he has done; and can believe, that he doth all Things well. And *that his Thoughts towards me, in that Respect were Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil.* I at some Times hope, that these Words, which so much ran in my Mind, in my *dear Babe's* Illness, have in some Measure been made good, *viz.* *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification.*

Now, what is Sanctification, but to have our Will wholly resigned to and swallowed up in the Will of God? And I think, if I know anything of my own Heart, I can say, that at Times, I have been helped quietly to acquiesce in the Will of God, In the Removal of one of the most engaging Babes, merely because it was the Will of my heavenly Father. The sweet Frames that I have at some Times been in, since her Departure, I cannot otherwise express, than that it was, as if my Will was indeed wholly swallowed up in the Will of God.

But alas! This is not always the Case: I meet with some Intervals, and such too, that at those Seasons, I can hardly tell how to bear up

under my Loss, which I don't find, that length of Time has any Tendency to abate the Sense of.



In answer to a Letter from her Mother, upon this delicate and affecting Subject, she speaks thus:

I Thank you for your seasonable Advice; but alas! I am too apt to murmur at this Dispensations of Providence, and think it is a Stroke too heavy for me to bear. I am sometimes like unto *Jonah*, *think I do well to be angry*; I am ready to call Providence to an Account, in this Manner; thinks I, why was she not removed sooner, before she was so exceedingly engaging? Or why had she not continued longer, that she might have been more capable of giving an Account of herself; that so we might have had full Satisfaction about her State. I have indeed been sadly distressed about that, tho' I sometimes think I have less Reason so to be, than many others have, (the means under such a Circumstance) for it is certain, she had *uncommon* Impressions upon her Mind some Time before her Illness. For she talked much about dying and being in Heaven, she wanted to know what would be her Employ there, and if she should not see more and know more, than she did here. In the midst of her Gaiety and Briskness, she would often change her Countenance, and look as grave and solid as any body could do; and running to me would say, Mamma, doth he that is above see me now? And is he angry with me? And many such Questions she often asked, that I many Times could not tell how to answer her. It would fill Sheets of Paper to relate her pretty Speeches, which were something remarkable.

It will likewise be too tedious to inform you here, of the various Trials and Temptations that I have laboured under, and the particular Supports I have had, in *my dear Babe's* Illness and since her Death: Only this I may say, that if I had not had some Supports, I think I could not have bore up under so sore a Trial, but I purpose to see you very soon: If the Lord permits me, I think to be at *Northampton* in less than a Fortnight, tho' it will be a melancholy Journey to me now. I pleased myself very much with the Thoughts of coming with my *dear Lamb* to *Northampton*, to shew you what a fine Babe she was grown. She was so much improved in less than two Years, that she was a Wonder to all that saw her: Her Temper was so *sweet*, and her Carriage so *affable*, and *pretty*, that rendered her agreeable to all our Acquaintance. She was generally beloved, her Company was much courted, she was much admired, and the Loss of her is much lamented, She was, I believe, as desirable a Child, as ever lived, an obliging dutiful Babe indeed, and a tender one, if we were not well; but as lovely a Creature, as she was, she was not too lovely for him,

who, I would hope, has taken her to himself. But it will be of no Service to go on thus.



She thus writes to one, who acquainted her with some Matters of Complaint relating to spiritual Things.

MY Experience is the same with yours, as to Disorders in Duty, and the Workings of Corruptions out of Duty. I find my Heart, as vain, and as carnal as ever, nay, I think far worse than ever; so that I often think, surely there is none in the World like me. You complain in yours of Heart-wanderings; so that you know not how to approach unto God in Prayer many Times. But remember that Covenant, wherein you are provided for, both in this Life, and that which is to come. By Virtue of that Covenant, Believers are fed with *the finest of the Wheat, and Honey out of the Rock*: And, indeed, we stand in great need thereof, at this Day, when we are encompassed with the Waters of *Marah*, viz. *Bitterness*, when *we are troubled on every Side*, yet (if we are made to act Faith in Christ) *not distressed*, 2 *Corinthians 4:8*. It is a small Thing to be buffeted of Satan, to be reproached by Men, if we can claim an Interest in the Power of Christ our Lord, that will support us, when all Creatures fail us. Outward Discouragements seem many and great, when Faith is weak and feeble, Unbelief stumble at many Things, which Faith steps over with ease.

Oh! may we be helped to wrestle with God for more Faith; surely, a Believer is under spiritual Decays, when he, or she, under a Want of Faith can neglect the Throne of Grace. Happy are those, whose Wants make

them more importunate, and earnest with the God of all Grace; such shall be supplied, *according to the Riches of his Glory. He that prepares the Heart to ask, will cause his Ear to bear*. Psalm 10:17. When God makes us earnest Beggars, in his Son's Name, he will make us successful ones for his Son's Sake. We have great Encouragement to ask, God takes Delight in Acts of Mercy, *Micah 7:1 8. He gives liberally, and upbraideth not*; he will not always deny us, because of our former Negligence. The Pleasure he takes in manifesting his Mercy, cannot be allayed by our Unworthiness, Darkness, Deadness, or any Thing of that Nature. We must consider, the Justice of God is fully satisfied, therefore, *Fury is not in him*. God can now deal with us *sinful Dust and Ashes*, in a Way of Mercy, without any Hindrance from his Justice; he hath regard to the perfect Satisfaction made thereunto, by his Son *Jesus Christ*; and as long as that is presented at the Right Hand of God the Father, so long we

have Ground to think, and believe, that no Shower of Wrath shall fall upon us: For altho' Faith in the presented Obedience of Christ, makes us comfortable, yet its Christ's presenting of it for us, makes us safe. The Actings of our Faith *ebb*, and *flow*; but the Righteousness of Christ is one, and the same for ever, *it shall never be abolished*. Neither Sin, nor Satan, Time, nor Eternity, can make any Alteration in it. It is Raiment, that *waxeth not old* upon us, notwithstanding we are, in this Wilderness-State exposed to many Storms and Tempests. Christ is *the Bread of Life*, and his Righteousness, is a Robe and *Garment of Salvation*.

Oh that we might be enabled to believe in him more stedfastly, not doubting, but we shall be preferred in the midst of the Tempest, remembering, that *this Man, Christ, is a hiding Place from the Storm, a Covert from the Tempest; as Rivers of Water in a dry Place, and as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land*. He is both Protection and Refreshment to us, in this howling Wilderness; but I must break off for Want of Time.



In another Letter she gives some Account of a Sermon, she heard from these Words: *Lo! the People shall dwell alone*, and of the Frame of her Mind while hearing of it: The Account she gives of the Sermon is this; that the People of God may be laid to dwell alone, as Objects of God's eternal Choice from among others: As Christ became their Surety, and by Reason of the Spirit's Work upon their Hearts. That they dwell alone in God's Love, in Christ's Love, and in the Love of the Spirit. And, that they may be said to dwell alone, in Respect of their Desires of Grace, their Aim, and End being God's Glory. All indeed, said he, may desire to be saved from Wrath and Misery; but their Desire is, that God may be glorified in, and by them, as well as that, they may partake of Happiness. Besides, they give Thanks and Praise to the Lord, in the Reception of Mercies, they are, in some measure, helped to eye from whence their Mercies flow, and so give God the Glory of all; whereas, others, if they enjoy the good Things of this Life they ascribe it to their good Endeavours, and good Management, *etc.* I was, says she, pretty much affected under hearing. I wish I had a Memory to retain what was delivered, so as to give you a particular Account thereof, and of my Frame under that Sermon, it was (some Particulars of it especially) very searching, which put me upon Self- Examination, and on the strictest Search, I thought, at least, that my Experience could witness to the Truth of what was said, and so I was in a comfortable Frame; but I have been often attended with questioning Thoughts this Week, and am now in a very discomposed Frame,

unfit indeed to write. I do not love Writing; but when I am in pretty lively Frames.

In another Letter to the same Person, when she was under Trouble of Soul, she thus expresses herself.

I cannot see, that I have any Grounds to suppose, that I have in Truth and Reality ventured my Soul upon Christ. It is one Thing to believe the Truth of his Word, and the All-sufficiency of his Grace, and another Thing to believe in him, and receive him, and rest upon him, for Life and Salvation. Neither am I, as I think, I ought to be, concerned about it; but am indeed possessed of Carelessness, and Indifferency too often: Tho' at some Times, I am almost overdone with Distress for a few Hours; but then it wears off again without any Application of pardoning Grace, and is succeeded by a careless Frame of Spirit; which seems to be a plain Demonstration, that I am still, *in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity*.

As to the Concern, that at some Times siezeth upon my Mind, I think its only the Accusation of a wounded Conscience, against which, I do to a very great Degree Sin daily; being guilty of Sins both of Omission and Commission; the which I know to be a Duty to do, or to avoid, and which doubtless will greatly aggravate my Torments in another World, Christ, himself saith, *John 15:22. If I had not spoken unto them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin.*

I have sometimes thought, that my neglecting to be found in the Ordinances of Christ, might be a Cause of my being left sometimes to careless Frames, and sometimes to unbelieving ones: And, that I had thereby given just Occasion to the holy Spirit, to withhold his gracious Influences; but I do now conclude, that I am still in an unconverted State, and, therefore, the Lord did not suffer me to deceive his Church and People: He would not permit me to be ranked amongst his dear chosen ones. And well it was, that I was kept from it. For, perhaps, I might then have brought a greater Dishonour to his Name, and a greater Reproach to his Gospel, than now I can, Tho' better it would have been, had I been wholly silent, and not acquainted any with what I, thro' a Delusion, fancied, that I met with. Surely Satan used more Subtlety in his Devices against me, than against any other. He took this Method to blind my Mind, and make me think, that I was in a safe State: Thus he hath deceived me: And now he lets me rest quietly. It is said of him, *2 Corinthians 11:14 that he transforms himself into an Angel of Light.*

I do not apprehend, that the Distress, that I am sometimes in, is from him; but as I before hinted, that it ariseth only from a Conscience wounded by Sin, which he perceiving, puts me in Mind of what I

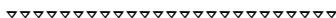
before met with, for my Relief at some Times. At other Times, brings other Things into my Mind, to take my Thoughts off from what should be the Matter of my greatest Concern. Thus is he, as I conceive, Time after Time, endeavouring this Way to deceive me, and to keep me from seeking after Salvation in a right Way.

These Words have often run in my Mind, of late especially, when I have been for fetching in Comfort from former Experience, then have they darted afresh into my Mind: *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* And also there: *So are the Paths of all that forget God; and the Hypocrite's Hope shall perish.* Yet how little am I concerned about it? Sometimes, as I before said, I am in sad Distress for a short Time; but certainly, if my Concern was of a right Kind, I should not rest satisfied without Discoveries of pardoning Grace. And if ever I had savingly closed Christ, then surely, I should find more earnest Desires after the Enjoyment of Communion with him.

Can a Soul, that hath tasted of his Grace, that hath enjoyed his comforting Presence, be contented to go from Day to Day, yea from Week to Week, without one View, or Token of his Love? You will doubtless say, no; then the true Reason of my so doing is, because I never tasted the Sweetness of it, and, therefore, cannot so thirst and breathe after it, as such do, who have (to the comforting of their Soul) received renewed Love-Visits from himself. A real Child of God values, and esteems Christ above all the World; but it is evident that I do not, because my Heart is so much taken up with the vain Things of this Life, that is at most not a Moment, when compared with Eternity. How happy are they, that have a well-grounded Assurance, that they shall live, everlastinglly possessed of all true joys, and Delights, such cannot be satisfied with earthly Riches, Honours, or Pleasures; but they are for the Riches and Glory of Heaven: It is a Crown of Glory, they have in their Eye, nothing but God himself will satisfy them, they count all Things but as Dross and Dung, in Comparison of Christ, and are freely willing to part with all for him, they are willing to *deny themselves, and take up their Cross, and follow him*, willing to do, or suffer any Thing; so that he may but be glorified in, and by them: His Glory is what they aim at in all they do. This I sometimes have thought I could say of myself; but now I see it is otherwise. I wish I could, with Truth, say thus. These are the Friends of Christ, and the only Favourites of Heaven: *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* They cannot by so doing purchase, or procure Christ's Love and Friendship; no, no, his Favour cannot be bought. *When they have done all, they must say we are unprofitable Servants.* Heaven is *not a Reward of Debt, but of Grace.* But Christ doth freely vouchsafe this Blessing to his chosen, who keep his Word, and its hereby they

are assured of his Love: *He that hath my Commandment, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father.* Persons may have Christ's Commandments in their Heads, and in their Mouths, may know what his Commandments be, and yet not have them in their Hearts, so as to keep them, or subject to them; but a truly godly Person loves them, approves of them, and sincerely keeps them. The Saints yield a ready and hearty Obedience to the Precepts, Christ hath given forth in the Gospel. *God be thanked, that ye were the Servants of Sin; but ye have obeyed from the Heart, that Form of Doctrine, which was delivered unto you.* The divine Doctrine hath great Efficacy on their Hearts. The Word makes an Impression on their Souls; so that with Joy and Delight they obey it, and from a right Principle, from a Principle of Life, from Faith in, and Love to Christ. Holy David could say: *I love thy Commandments above Gold; yea above fine Gold.* <<sup>19B9127</sup>> Psalm 119:127. And he also says: *Therefore, I esteem all thy Precepts, concerning all Things to be right; and I hate every false Way.* But as for me, sad is my Case, I do not find that Hatred to Sin, as its an Offence to the most high God, which he speaks of. I may, perhaps, be afraid of sinning, for Fear or heightening my Torments; but I do not think I ever was made rightly sensible of the *odious* and *abominable* Nature of Sin. Nor do I find that Love to Christ, his People, and to his Ways, as I think his dear Children do. Is it a Sign of Love to Christ, when the Heart is almost wholly taken up with the Things of this World, and the Mind is remiss, careless, and of one kind, negligent, in discharging Duties and another, which are by Christ enjoined upon us to observe? No, no, this is no Testimony thereof; but on the contrary Hand, it is a very evident Proof, beyond all Denial, either that there is no Grace at all, in such who are thus vainly carried away, or else, that it lies dormant; but I fear the former is my Case, nay, I am almost certain of it: For those *faint* Desires I have of being saved, proceed not from a Desire that God may be glorified; but only for Fear of the Torments of Hell, nor are those Fears strong enough to make me willing to forsake the vain Things of this World, as I can perceive; notwithstanding the greatest Joy, and worldly Riches and Glory, are not to be compared to the Glory of Heaven, nor the greatest Sorrow, or Trouble here, to the Torments of Hell. Can you (now I have in a small Degree made known my Case to you) I say, can you suppose me to be a true Believer in Christ? Be not so deceived, neither pray for me, as such: But if the Lord inclines your Heart to put a Petition for me, then beg, that I may be rightly convinced of the Evil of Sin, and of my woful and undone Condition thereby, and of the Necessity of a Mediator, or Saviour, and also, that that I may see the Excellency of that the blessed Saviour, and the great Power and Ability, he is clothed with

to save, and that I may be helped to venture my Soul upon him, that I may receive him, and rest, and rely upon him alone for Salvation. I know, my Sins, tho' they be very numerous, are not too many, nor too great to be pardoned, if such a Mercy is but in Reversion for me. Christ's Arm is not shortened, his Power is not limited. He can, if he pleases, come over all the Mountains of my Rebellion.



In another Letter to the same Person, she writes thus:

YOURS I received, in which are contained Intimations of the Love and Kindness of the Lord *Jesus* taking hold of your Soul; and making you a Partaker of the Grace of Life. In the Views of which you are led into the Admiration of his Excellency, and the Wonders of his Grace. That the Savour and Power, of those Soul-refreshing Truths, are in some measure experienced by you. Oh! that lovely one, how sweet are the least Glimpses of his peculiar Favour; when he is pleased to give some special Discoveries of it, in our attending upon him. But what will it be, when we shall *enter into the Joy of our Lord*, and be made to swim in that *vast unfathomable* Ocean of eternal Love and Glory? in the mean Time, it must be testified, that the blessed *Jesus* deserves the highest Seat and Entertainment in our Hearts. Where should he be let, but in the midst of our dearest and most ardent Love, to command all in us to a most willing Obedience, and to the utter abolishing of all our Idols, that *he alone may be exalted?* It is his own Power and Spirit, that only can maintain his noble Cause, or effectually plead for his Royal Prerogative in our Souls. But, Oh! what need have we to be begging of God, that there may be a reviving Time, after such a long Winter-Season, for if these withering, backsliding Days be not shortened, how will his Honour be vindicated?

It is Matter of great Concern to me, at Times, to see the Decays there are amongst the Professors, in this our Age; as well as to feel the Declinings in my own Soul. And I am sometimes ready to say, what will become of God's great Name? But this may be our strong Consolation, that there is no limiting of his Power, nor searching of his Understanding. He knows how to restore in a Moment the Desolation of many Generations. He can, if he pleases, revive his Children, and make them to rejoice in him, and cause them to flourish in the Courts of their God. The Lord help us to live by Faith, and to rejoice in the Hope of his Glory, knowing, that none ever trusted in him, and were confounded.

You desire to hear how it fares with me, as to the present Frame of my Soul. I have not Time to give you a particular Account thereof. I could wish, that it was with me, as in Days past; but alas! it is quite

otherwise. I find a great deal of Coldness and Indifferency attending me, and Abundance of Sin mixed, even with the best of my Performances. I seldom can go to God in the Duty of Prayer; but my Heart is roving after vain Things. O the Thousands of Thoughts, that will even at such Seasons crowd in, to interrupt, and disturb me in my Supplications to the most High. Neither do I find my Heart so drawn out to the Lord, nor do I enjoy that Nearness to, and Communion with him as I was wont to do. Yet I am not left to give up all Hopes. At some Times the Thoughts and Consideration of the Frames I am too often in, is very distressing to me; at other Times, I am wholly careless, and unconcerned about it.

One Day, not long since, as I was thinking how I have been in Times past, how much of the sensible Presence of God, I then enjoyed, and how pleasant and delightful it was; I had a great Desire to participate of the same Favour once more, and to that End, I resolved to betake myself to the Duty of holy Meditation. I retired to my Room, for that Purpose; but when I came there, I found my Thoughts much confused and rambling, and could not come at one serious Thought of God, or his Works, for a considerable Time. I then thought with myself, I came here to think, and contemplate upon divine Things, and not to have my Thoughts, thus vainly carried away. I then reflected again, that if I was to watch my Thoughts, but one Hour, I might observe a Multitude of sinful ones; but find it hard to have one serious Thought of God, or for him; so that I thought I had Reason to stand and wonder, that God did not cut me off, and cast me among the damned. But whilst I was thus thinking, my Thoughts were still wandering; so that I saw I had not Power over one Thought.

Under a Sense of this I went to God, desiring that he would direct my Thoughts and assist me. He was pleased graciously to answer my Request. I was for a few Hours very comfortable, but alas! it abode not long. Oh! I long to feel more of the kindly Power of Christ in subduing my Will, and bringing every Thought in Subjection to his Law.



In another of her Letters she thus speaks.

I AM willing to embrace an Opportunity of writing to you, by which you may understand that I have you still in Remembrance; and am, as helped, in my Prayers to the Lord making Request for you, that you may be filled with all Joy and Peace in Believing, even *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*; and that you may be led more fully into the Knowledge of divine Truths, *as they are in Jesus*. It is not a bare Notion of Things in the Head; but a *real Experimental*

Knowledge of Christ, and him crucified that will stand us in Stead. The great *Apostle* accounted *all Things but Loss and Dung*, in Comparison of *the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus*, rejecting all *Confidence in his own Righteousness*, and resting wholly and only on Christ and his Righteousness for Justification and Acceptance with God. Indeed, it is in the Lord Jesus only, that we have Righteousness and Strength. And this is such a Righteousness, as can answer all the Demands of Justice, and all the Requirements of the Law of God, and all the Guilt of Conscience, yea, and all the Accusations of *Satan*, and render a Person spotless and amiable in the Sight of God. We are complete in Christ. Fair and comely tho' in ourselves, we are unworthy, vile, and deformed; so that we may say with the *Apostle*, *who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect, etc.* Oh! the Wonders of divine, glorious, sovereign, distinguishing Grace, that such poor, sinful, polluted Wretches as we, should be so highly favoured and dignified, brought into such Nearness of Union to, and Communion with God, by the blessed Jesus. Oh! how comfortable and pleasant is it to live in the Views of God's reconciled Face, and to taste the Sweetness of his Love, which is *better than Wine*. How should such Love and Grace engage us, to love God and live to him? Yea, and to trust in him? It is Matter of Astonishment and Admiration, that it should please the *high and lofty one*, to set his Love on such unworthy Wretches, and to draw them with the Cords of his Loving-kindness. There is nothing so sweet and excellent, as to behold the Beauty, or to be taken with Love of the most excellent Jesus. It is a sweet Life to dwell in the *Secret of his Pavilion*, to have a Place among them that stand by, and see the lovely Face, where the *divine Majesty* may be approached unto, in a Way of intimate holy Communion and Acquaintance, where we shall hear of nothing but Peace; nothing but the Law of *Kindness and Liberty* is delivered from *Mount Zion*, where God hath commanded the *Blessing, even Life for evermore*. A Liberty not of Slaves, which is Freedom from Duty; but of Sons, which is Freedom in Duty; especially to live upon, delight in, and chuse him above all, who is graciously multiplying Experiences of his Grace to our Souls. What Reason have we to be praising of him with the greater Thankfulness of Heart, that ever he should cast one favourable Look upon such vile Dust, who deserved to be cast into the Dungeon of utter Darkness for ever? I think, that I above all have Cause to admire the stupendous Grace and Love of God, that he should come over the Mountains of my Rebellions, and reveal pardoning Grace unto me, (who am viler than the vilest Sinner that lives) as I cannot now, but hope he hath. I am often, yea, very often attended with Questionings and Fears, that I may be mistaken herein. I am sometimes, as it were, raising the very Foundation of all

my Hope of Happiness, concluding, that the Work of Grace hath never yet passed upon me, and supposing that if the Lord had ever been at work upon my Soul in a true and saving Manner; then I should have had a deeper Sight and Sense of my own Vileness, than ever yet I have had, and *Satan* would have been busier with me, and I should have met with stronger Assaults and Temptations from him, as most of the Children of God do, when under first Workings. These Objections, with many others rob me of my Comfort. Sometimes I think my Desire of being saved, was never from a right Principle, nor to a right End; but arose from a selfish Bottom, to the End, that I might be delivered from eternal Wrath and Misery, not aiming at God's Glory therein. Thus am I many Times writing bitter Things against myself, concluding, that I have not yet been helped to venture my Soul on Christ; for think I, I fear that I am still leaning to, and depending upon something in myself, and not resting upon the Merits of Christ, as the only Way of Salvation. Besides, think I, if there ever had been a real Change wrought in my Soul; then would my Heart, my Thoughts, and Affections, be let more upon Things that are heavenly and divine, and I should be weaned from the Things of this World, in a far greater Measure; I should find my Heart more drawn out in Love to the Lord Jesus, and should see a greater Beauty and Excellency in his Person and Righteousness, and likewise Sin would appear more hateful and odious in my View. I should not be attended with such vain Thoughts and Backslidings of Heart from the Lord, and with careless, lifeless, and indifferent Frames, as I too too often am. Are there Spots, like *the Spots of God's Children?* Surely they are not. Neither are such, who have indeed *passed from Death unto Life*, left so often to question their State. They have clearer and more certain Evidences and Testimonies of their Security, and are enabled to rely upon, and trust in the Lord, even when they do not enjoy his sensible Presence. *Job* could say, *tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* And the Lord, by the Prophet *Isaiah* saith, *who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness and hath no Light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God:* Yet how prone am I at every turn to dishonour the Lord, by unbelieving Frames?

There are some of the Fears, which I am very frequently filled with; but Oh! what a Mercy is it, the Lord *rests in his Love? He is the same towards us yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* Tho' we vary in our Frames, *yet he abideth faithful; he changeth not.* There is no *Variableness*, nor so much as a *Shadow of turning in him.*

Oh! that the eternal Spirit would come down more abundantly, and persuade us of the Freeness and Fulness of eternal Grace: That we

might be made to behold our living in the *Root of David*, from the utmost Bounds of Eternity, yea, also while we were in the Depths or our Rebellions, which thro' Grace, I have been at Times made to believe; did I believe God's Love to be but of *Yesterday*, it would much damp my spiritual Comforts; but when I am brought to see the Fountain of this great Depth of electing Love to be eternal, as ancient as God himself; how am I made to rejoice sometimes, and to wish I could do more for my dearest Jesus? Surely,

there is no Spring of Obedience like that of Love, yea, from that it becomes us to act under this new Testament Dispensation, in an especial Manner.



She finishes this Letter with some Account of a Sermon, which she heard from these Words: O my Dove that art in the Clefts of the Rock, in the secret Places of the Stairs; let me see thy Face, let me hear thy Voice; for sweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely. The Method in treating on which, she says, was this: To shew why the Church is compared to Doves, viz. because the Dove is a clean Fowl, hath a piercing Eye, is choice, or delicate in its Meat, and is sociable: Doves flock together and are weak Creatures, not able to defend themselves. That they are Christ's Doves, or that the Church is his by Election, Covenant-Agreement, Purchase, Conquest, and Resignation; that the Rock is Christ, who is so called, because he is strong, durable, and immovable; that the Church's Voice may intend her Voice of Prayer, Praise, Acknowledgment, and the Voice of the Ministry. That the Voice of the Church in these Respects is sweet to Christ. That she is comely thro' the Comeliness Christ puts upon her.

She was no injudicious Hearer. In forming her Opinion of Sermons, she closely considered whether the Subject treated of, was properly attended unto. If the genuine Sense of the Text was given, and if its several Parts were distinctly considered. If there were no unnecessary Digressions. If the Scriptures brought in Confirmation of the Doctrine delivered, were pertinently applied. If such Distinctions were made, as the Points discoursed of required, for the greater Benefit and Instruction of the Hearers, which I could give Evidence of, if I thought it proper; for her Talents were truly great.

It is needless to say, that she greatly valued the Gospel of Christ in its Purity, for that appears in the fullest manner. The sad Effects which she experienced in one Part of her Life, thro' the Want of it, she long retained a deep Sense of. Which appears in Part of a Letter to one, for whom she had a great Affection, then in much the same

Situation, as to Hearing, that she herself, many Years before had been in. She begins thus:

I pity your Case, yet dare I not so much as desire you might be easy in your present Situation. This I desire, that you may learn Good thereby, and that you may let a higher Value on the Doctrine of free, rich, sovereign Grace. 'Tis a Just Observation, that we do not prize our Mercies, as we ought, but in the Want of them. I doubt not, but you do now so much prize, in the Want of it, *i.e.* the Gospel, as to long for the Re-enjoyment thereof. I wish you may continue thus minded: And that that sort of Preaching which you chiefly hear, may not have the same Influence on you, as it hath upon too many, *viz.* flatten your Graces, and lull you into a lethargic Frame, as was once my unhappy Case. For fitting under the Ministry of one, who either thro' Ignorance, or which I rather think, out of *Prudence*, as he thought, avoided preaching on those peculiar, evangelical Truths, which are the Life of a Believer: By Degrees, I became dead, dull, and lifeless; a common Round of Duties satisfied me, and Grace lay dormant, as to the Act and Exercise of it; yet here I wilfully staid. When I might have heard that Word dispensed, which I had thought had been *sweeter to me, than the Honey, or the Honey-comb*. When I came to my wonted Place, and heard the same sweet comfortable, and Soul-reviving Truths delivered, tho' by another Hand: Oh! what did I not feel? I was struck with Shame and Confusion, for having wilfully deprived myself of so great a Privilege, which I ought to have *esteemed more than my necessary Food*: I thought it was just for the Spirit to withdraw his Influences and Operations. But alas! Shame for my Negligence was not the worst, for now I called in Question, whether ever I had felt the Power, and Efficacy of the Word upon my Heart, or not, and at length drew sad Conclusions against myself. This may serve for a Caution to you, not to stay longer in a Place, than you are obliged, where you cannot have spiritual Food for your Soul.



In another Letter, she expresses herself thus:

MAY Grace, Mercy, and Peace, thro' the Love-Passage of our Father's Heart be multiplied to you, to your abundant filling with the first Fruits of Glory unspeakable; in the Faith-Views, and irradiating Influences of that Love, Life, and Light, which as an eternal unchangeable Flow of Favour encircles you in the Person of the Beloved. The Spirit giving us to drink of the Streams of the Waters of Life, makes us glad in the Wilderness, as the certain Earnest and Foretaste of our being hereafter swallowed up, in that Love, Life, Light, and Glory, which flew thro' the Channel of Christ's Flesh, as

*a River to Swim in, that can never be passed over:* When once that happy Day comes, when we shall no more drink of the Water of this River, as now we do, thro' the Conduit-Pipes of Ordinances; but shall drink of the *pure River of the Water of Life, clear as Crystal, as it riseth, out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb*; there (if I may so say) we shall drink our Fill: Tho' this will be our Privilege, that the living Vertue of this *living Water*, will constantly maintain in us, a living Appetite, yet not such an one as will be in the least inconsistent, with our being abundantly satisfied. We shall never more know any Pain of Desire, for Want of Enjoyment: We shall drink, and *forget our Poverty, and remember our Misery no more*. And our Appetite being always new, will only fit us for the Participation of that Glory, which will be *new to Eternity*. When that longed for Day comes, when *the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall lead us to living Fountains*, and give us to eat of the *hidden Manna*, on which we shall feed with Wonder, and sweet Surprize; as the Children of *Israel*, when they tasted the *Manna*, in a kind of Amazement at the Goodness thereof, cried out, What is it? What is it? I had such a View of this Glory one Day last Week, and an home Application of my being entitled unto it, and having a Right to all the Benefits, which flow thro' Christ, as filled me with Astonishment. A sweet Time it was, indeed, while it lasted; but it was but for a few Hours. Such Times are very desirable, and very delightful. I was ready to cry out, as he of old did: *How is it Lord, that thou wilt manifest thyself to me, and not unto the World?* I knew then for a little Season, what it is, to take up my Rest, where my God and Father rests. I am, at Times, thro' Grace, made to believe, that I have *received the Spirit of Adoption*, not only to witness my Relation to God, and give me Faith-Views of the Inseparableness of that Union, in which I stand to the Person of Christ, as the Security of all my Happiness; but also, at Times, to give me the greatest holy Freedom, thro' the Blood of *Jesus*, to draw nigh to God, as my own Father, to unbosom my Soul to him, and tell him all my Wants; and blessed be his Name, I have not been *sent away empty*.

I have found the Enjoyment of God to be Strength in Weakness, Joy in Sorrow, a reviving Cordial in Time of Trouble. And in all that I meet with in my Way homeward; I can fly he is God All-sufficient, I find him so thro' Grace.

Oh! how sweet is it to enjoy this Love of Loves? *Oh! the Height, and Depth, the Length, and Breadth, of the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.* If the Enjoyment of God be so great here, whilst in a Body of Sin, and in a World of Temptations and Snares; what will the full Enjoyment of him be, where there will be no Mixture of Sin, nor Sorrow? if the *Earnest* be so great, what will the

Inheritance be? Well may it be said: *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

What this *dear* Saint so much longed for, the took Possession of, now some Years since. May we be enabled *to follow those, who through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promise.*

# SERMON 16

## THE CAUSES OF SALVATION AND VOCATION CONSIDERED

IN A SERMON PREACH'D ON LORD'S DAY, DEC. 22, 1751,  
TO THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN CRISPIN-STREET,  
SPITAL-FIELDS,

WHEREOF THE Late Revd. Mr. WILLIAM BENTLEY was PASTOR

*Published at their own Request*

TO THE CHURCH

Assembling in *Crispin-Street*

*Beloved Brethren in our common Lord,*

YOUR Desire of this Publication is an Evidence that you approve of the Doctrine delivered in the Discourse. As I am persuaded, upon the most serious and deliberate Enquiry, which I have been able to make, that nothing is advanced, but what *strictly* agrees with Scripture, and, as to the Substance of it, hath been the common Faith of Christians, I was willing to comply with your Request; not with the least Expectation, that the Principles pleaded for, or my Manner of Treating on them, will meet with a favourable Reception from any considerable Number of Professors. My Acquaintance with the *prevailing* Sentiments and *polite* Taste of the present Age will not permit me to hope for either. But, if the Perusal of what you *candidly* heard, when delivered from the *Pulpit*, may be of any Service to establish you in the important Truths, which are the Subject: of this Sermon, that, with me, will much over-balance the highest Contempt, which the Adversaries of those *glorious* Truths may be pleased to cast upon it:

For, if I am not *absolutely* a Stranger to myself, (which I would not be) I am desirous to assert and defend Evangelical Principles, and confirm the Faith of the Saints therein. My Persuasion that you with for Success in every such Attempt emboldens me to acquaint you, that I have prepared an Answer to a Pamphlet on the Subject of Atonement, wherein the *Fundamental* Doctrine of the Satisfaction of Christ is entirely explained away. That Piece had not lien so long, as it has, without Notice taken of it, if I had not entertained Hopes, that some Person, better qualified for such a Service, would have undertook it. There are *some Remarks* upon it just now published: But, as the Author of that Performance is very far from answering my Wishes on that momentous Doctrine, I shall not suppress what I

have drawn up in Answer to it: And, probably, I may acquaint the Reader with some of my Reasons for my Conduct in Relation to this Matter. You have my *Condolence* in your present Situation; and I shall rejoice in an Opportunity to congratulate you on the happy Occasion, of a Supply with a Pastor every Way qualified *to build you up on your mast holy Faith.*

I am Yours to serve in the Gospel of Christ, J.B.

## 2 TIMOTHY 1:9

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our own Works; but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the World began.”

THE Zeal of the Apostle *Paul* for the Propagation of the Gospel, and his indefatigable Endeavours to spread the Interest of Christ drew upon him the keen Resentment of such, who were Adversaries to both. In Consequence of which, he was exposed to Penury, Reproach, and violent Persecution. But what he suffered, for the Sake of the Gospel, did not make him, in the least Degree, ashamed of it: Because he knew, that *it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one who believes*: And, that *therein is revealed the Righteousness of God, from Faith to Faith*. He exhorts *Timothy* to shew the same Resolution and Fortitude, in the Discharge of that important Service whereunto he was called in the Church of God. *Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the Testimony of the Lord, nor of me his Prisoner, but be thou Partaker of the Afflictions of the Gospel according to the Power of God.* And, ***In the Text, he proposes to his Consideration various important Truths***, in order to enforce the Exhortation, and animate him in his ministerial Work.

**First.** Two Acts of God towards, or upon us, are expressed: *Who hath saved us and called us, etc.*

**Secondly.** A negative Assertion, in Respect to those Acts: *Not according to our Works.*

**Thirdly.** A positive Assertion: But according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ before the World began.

***First. Two Acts of God towards, or upon us, are expressed, in the Text.***

**I.** *Who hath saved us.* This leads us to consider our State. To enquire what Salvation includes in it. And to shew, that Salvation is effected: Or that those Things are accomplished, which Salvation comprises, as it is here to be understood.

**1st.** Our State is wretched and deplorable. We have destroyed ourselves, and are obnoxious unto the greatest Misery: We are *wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked*.

(1.) We are chargeable with original Guilt. *By one Man, Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin: Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned, or, in whom all have sinned* (Romans 5:12). *By one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners* (Romans 5:19). *Adam*, from whom we descend, was constituted our Representative; his Act of Transgression, therefore, was not his Act, as a private, but a public Person: And *we sinned in him, and fell with him, in his Apostacy*. In Consequence of which,

(2.) We derive a corrupt Nature from him. *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh: And that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit* (John 3:6). It is not difficult to understand what is meant by *Flesh*; for, as it stands opposed to *that which is born of the Spirit*, it must mean corrupt and evil Dispositions of Mind. And, consequently, every natural Descendant of *Adam*, in his Conception and Birth, becomes the Subject of depraved Habits. *David* confesses his early Depravation: *Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me* (Psalm 51:5). This Confession respects not the Sin of his Parent, but his own: Besides, it is as *ridiculous* to say, that *David's* Mother sinned in Conception, as to affirm, that she sinned in digesting her Food, the former being natural and involuntary, as well and as much as the latter.

(3.) We have contracted much Guilt. We were naturally under the Dominion of Sin: Servants to it, and it bore the Sway in us. Our Omissions of Duty have been many, and we performed no Branch of it, in that holy Manner which the Law requires; in numerous Instances, have acted directly contrary to the Command of God. *All have sinned and come short of his Glory: We have all had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lust of our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh, and of the Mind; and were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others* (Ephesians 2:3). *For we ourselves also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another* (Titus 3:3). The Eruptions of Lust have been more and greater in some, than in others; but all have acted a criminal Part, and not been subject to the Law, the Rule of Action. So that every Man is far, very far, from being innocent in his Behaviour.

(4.) We are condemned by the Law. *Cursed is very one, who continueth not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them* (Galatians 3:10). Every Deviation from the Rule of our Duty, and the improper Performance of it, subjects us unto the Law's

Curse; and, therefore, as our Offences are innumerable, we must needs be in a very deplorable Condition, in Consequence of our multiplied Transgressions. So many as are our Sins, are the Curses due unto us on Account of them.

(5.) We are obnoxious to Divine Vengeance. There is no Exemption in this Case. *For, what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under it, that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God* (Romans 3:19). If any Man pleads his Innocence, he necessarily rejects Christ, as a Saviour, and renounces that Salvation, which the Gospel reveals through his Blood and Righteousness, and openly declares that his Condition is such, as makes it unnecessary for him to crave the Exercise of pardoning Mercy in his Favour. All Men are worthy of Death, of eternal Death, which *is the Wages of sin, as the Gift of God is eternal Life*. These Hints are sufficient, if we have a Capacity of spiritual Discernment, to convince us of our wretched and miserable State and Condition in some Measure.

This is the sad State of us all: I and each of you are naturally in this perishing Condition.

**2nd.** Salvation, as it is here to be understood, implies the following Particulars.

(1.) Non-Imputation of Sin. This necessarily enters into, and is a considerable Branch of Salvation, for no Deliverance from deferred Penalty can be without it. *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespasses unto them* (2 Corinthians 5:19). Redemption supposes the Pardon of Sin: *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins* (Ephesians 1:7). The Imputation of Sin is followed with Condemnation, and the Infliction of Punishment, and, consequently, Salvation implies a Discharge from Guilt.

(2.) Redemption from the Curse of the Law. This is a Consequence of the former. For, as the Imputation of Guilt is necessarily attended with, or brings us under an Obnoxiousness to the Law's Curse: So the Remission of our Sins supposes a Right unto Freedom from Condemnation. *There is no Condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1). It cannot, with any Propriety, be said that we are saved, if we have no Right to Freedom from those Menaces, whereunto our Crimes justly exposed our Persons.

(3.) Deliverance from Divine Wrath, or Security from suffering the vindictive Displeasure of God. Our Misery is an Obnoxiousness to suffering his terrible Anger and Vengeance, and, therefore our

Salvation must imply an *actual* Right unto Deliverance from his *fiery Indignation*, which would devour us.

(4.) A Right to Life and Blessedness. If we are left without a Title to Happiness, our Salvation is incomplete: For, that not only is Deliverance from Evil, or the Suffering of Punishment; but it is the Fruition of Good, and, therefore, a Right to eternal Life is no less included in the Idea of Salvation, than a Right unto an Exemption from suffering Punishment is therein contained. *That, being justified by his Grace, we might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life* (Titus 3:7).

**3rd.** God hath saved us; or our Salvation, as it is inclusive of these Things, is effected already.

(1.) Sin is expiated. According to ancient Promise and Prophecy, Christ hath *finished Transgression, and made an End of Sin* (Daniel 9:24) in its Guilt: *He hath removed our Transgressions from us, as far as the East is from the West* (Psalm 103:12). And those contrary Points will sooner meet, than the Persons of God's People and their Sins will meet in Judgment, to their Condemnation. *Once in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself* (Hebrews 9:26): *When the Iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none, and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve* (Jeremiah 50:20).

(2.) Redemption from the Law's Curse is obtained fully and effectually. *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us* (Galatians 3:13). The penal Death of our Saviour, procured for us a Right unto a Freedom from Condemnation; if not, we shall never have such a Right, but must for ever lie under the dreadful Malediction of the Covenant of Works, and perish under that Curse.

(3.) Exemption from suffering Punishment. Right unto this is the certain and immediate Effect of his Sufferings and Death. If it is not, then, if ever, we have such a Right, that must: be the Fruit and Effect of something else, and not of his penal Death: What that can be, let us be informed. Until we are, we shall conclude with the Apostle: *Much more then being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him* (Romans 5:9). If the Death of Christ, in a proper Sense, is the meritorious Cause of our Pardon, Right to Impunity must be the certain and immediate Consequence of it.

(4.) Right to Life is also what exists. Christ hath brought in an everlasting Righteousness for us, which is the Foundation of our Claim to future Blessedness: *That, being justified by his Grace, we*

*might be made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life.* As our Breach of the Law subjected us to Death, so our Saviour's Obeying it for us, as our Surety, gives us a proper Title and Claim to Life and Happiness, without the Intervention of any Thing, which can be named.

Before I proceed farther, I beg Leave to observe,

[1.] Salvation precedes, and is the Foundation of Calling. We are saved in order to, or that we may be called. Our Vocation is among those Things, which were promised to Christ, in our Behalf, when he undertook to effect the Work of our Redemption: *When thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, be shall see his Seed* (Isaiah 53:10); *i.e.* he shall see them regenerated, sanctified, and made meet for Heaven, and in the Possession of it. As this was promised, upon his stipulating to offer himself a Sacrifice for our Sins: His Performance of that Engagement, procured for us a Right to Grace and Glory. Hence it is evident, that our Vocation follows upon the Impetration of our Salvation by his Death and Sacrifice.

[2.] It is certainly false, that what Christ obtained for us, was an Offer of Pardon and Salvation: Or a Declaration and Promise from God, that he would pardon and save us, upon our performing such, or the other Conditions. The Virtue, Efficacy, and Merit of the Redeemer's Blood and Righteousness are not dependent on any Thing in us; they result entirely from the Nature of his Sufferings, Obedience, and the Dignity of his Person, and, therefore, of themselves, without the Performance of any Conditions by us, are available to procure for us what Benefits were promised to us by the Divine Father, upon his Undertaking, as our Surety, to obey the Law and suffer its Curse: And, consequently, it is false, that Christ obtained for us only a Proposal, or verbal Grant of Salvation; and we are not left to acquire for ourselves a Right to Pardon, Peace, and eternal Blessedness, which many affirm we are.

[3.] God is the Origin, as Christ is the meritorious Cause of Salvation. It is *of him, that we are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption* (1 Corinthians 1:30). The Father drew the Plan of our Salvation. It springs from his infinite Love, and all the Branches of it were fixed and settled, in his infinitely wise and eternal Counsels. But more of this, by and by.

## II. *Hath called us with an holy Calling*

**1st.** This Call is internal and effectual. It is not to be understood of an Invitation, or external Call, given to us in the Gospel to repent and reform, as many, in our Times, interpret it. This Vocation is an

internal Work upon us. And it is the same as the Apostle expresses in these Words: *Being confident of this very Thing, that be which hath begun a good Work in you* (Philippians 1:6). *It is begetting us again. Quickening of us when dead in Trespasses and Sins.* And it is *creating us in Christ Jesus unto good Works.* Therefore, something is produced in us, except there may be a Regeneration without any Thing being generated. Unless Quickenings may be, without a Communication of Life. And, unless a creating Act may take Place, when nothing is produced, or brought into Being; neither of which can reasonably be supposed. It is effectual: *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power* (Psalm 110:3). *Every Man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Christ* (John 6:45). None remain unwilling, when Divine Power is exerted to make willing. And no Man refuses to come to Christ, or believe in him, who receives gracious Instruction from, and is drawn by the Father.

**2nd.** It is a holy Calling. It may be fitly so represented; for,

(1.) It is an Implantation of a holy Principle in the Mind, but not an Expulsion of Sin. The Subjects of this Vocation are *the Workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.* The Author and End of this Work evince the Holiness of its Nature. And it is a *Meetness* for Heaven, and, therefore, it must be good, pure, and holy. But it is not an Expulsion of Sin. It deprives Sin of its Dominion, but leaves it its Being in the Heart. If any Man seriously thinks, that he hath nothing of Sin in him, it is a *sad Evidence*, that he is destitute of Holiness, and hath in him nothing but Sin. *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us* (1 John 1:8). This may be of Use to guide us, as a Rule, in the Examination and Trial of our Hearts. For, on one Hand, when we search for Evidences of Grace in ourselves, we are not to expect to find a Freedom from the Being and Actings of Sin in us, and, therefore, we should not conclude, that we have no Grace, because we have Sin: Which some are sometimes tempted to think of themselves, on Account of their Imperfection: And, on the other Hand, we must not imagine, that we are regenerate Persons, without we have some Evidence of Holiness in us; for, though the Being of Corruption consists with the Truth of Grace in the Heart, that can evidence to none his Regeneration. As an excellent Divine observes, *The Being of Cockle in a Field is no Proof that Wheat is there:* So Corruption cannot evidence to us the Being of Grace in our Souls. We may have the *Lust of the Saints*, and have none of their Graces. We may possess their *Deformities*, and be wholly destitute of their *Beauties.* This brings me to observe,

(2.) All the Actings of our Minds, according to this Principle, are holy and spiritual. The regenerate Part of a Believer *delights* in the Law of God, and *serves* it. And, therefore, we may know from what Principle the Acts of our Minds spring, by a proper Consideration of their Nature: Whether they arise from the *Flesh*, or from the *Spirit*. All *vain* Imaginations: All *irregular* Thoughts: All *disorderly* and *inordinate* Desires: All *evil* Tendencies in our Affections, take their Rise from the Flesh in us. And every pure, spiritual Act, springs from the heavenly Principle in our Souls. The Want of a due Attention unto this hath sometimes been the Occasion of *great Perplexities and distressing Fears*, to truly humble and holy Persons. And let us carefully remember this, that whatever we think of ourselves, and what Opinion soever others may have of us; we are no *farther* holy, than this *spiritual Principle* is exercised in our Minds, upon Objects of a spiritual Nature, to which it is congruous. This, it may be, will furnish many of us with just Cause of great Humiliation, and convince us, that we have *sad* Reason to cry out; *Oh, our Leanness, our Leanness, the treacherous Dealers have dealt treacherously!*

**Secondly. Neither Salvation, nor Calling, is according to our Works.** Grace and Works are set in Opposition, whenever the Causality of our Salvation is treated of. They cannot be, therefore, *Con-causes* of it, *If it is of Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace: If it be of Works, then it is no more of Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work. It is not of Works, lest any Man should boast.* (Romans 11:6,

Ephesians 2:9).

Men have always endeavoured to establish the Doctrine of Salvation, by Works, at least, in Part; and on this Subject they have expressed themselves variously, but much the same Thing is meant. It ought to be observed that Language is entirely arbitrary, and, therefore, variable, and may be changed according to the Inclination of Writers. But Principles are eternal Things, whether true or false. That which was once a Truth will for ever remain such, and that which once was false can never become true. But a Change in the Mode of Language, whereby Doctrines are expressed, sometimes is taken for an Advancement of *new* Thoughts, or the Striking out of *new Light*, upon Subjects, natural, and, supernatural. Whereas no new Ideas are brought forth, and presented to View; they are no other than old Thoughts put into a *new Dress*, which makes not the least Alteration in their Nature; they are still the very same they always were, whether true or false. And, therefore, it is an Evidence of Weakness and Vanity in those Men, who seem willing to have it thought, that they make new and farther Discoveries, when they

convey only *old* Notions, put into a later and more fashionable Garb, according to the Fancy and Humour of the Age, wherein they happen to live. Thus it hath fallen out on the Subject under our present Consideration: Sometimes it hath been said, that Works are a proper Condition of Salvation, on which it is suspended: Or it is by sincere Obedience, in Opposition to feigned: Or there is a Congruity and Fitness, in Repentance and Obedience, to entitle us to the saving Benefits of Christ: Or, as the *modish* Authors of our Times speak, real, *i.e.* personal Holiness, or personal Worth, renders us fit Objects of pardoning Mercy, and of the Complacency or moral Approbation of God, which, they say, it was absolutely impossible that the Obedience and Sacrifice of Christ could do. Now it is easy to observe, that the same Thing is contended for, in these various Forms of Speech, *viz.* that Salvation and Happiness are the proper Fruits of our Repentance and Obedience, and not Effects obtained for us by the Righteousness and Sacrifice of Christ. For, it seems, the whole Efficacy of his Obedience and Sacrifice, in the Business of Remission and Acceptation with God, is wholly dependent on, and in Pursuance of a Divine Decree, that so it shall; it results from our good Dispositions and worthy Actions. *This is a Renunciation of the whole Gospel.* We are told, that the Grace of God confers, and the Death of Christ procured for us, *antecedent Blessings*, and that this is the *grand* Point, which the Apostle *Paul*, with so much Reasoning, proves, particularly, in his *Epistle to the Romans*. Well, what are these antecedent Blessings? Are they Pardon, Peace, Reconciliation, Acceptance with God, Regeneration, Sanctification, and a Right to future Blessedness? No. What are they then? They are nothing more than God's telling us, that he will pardon and save us, if we render ourselves, by a suitable Temper and becoming Behaviour, the fit Objects of his moral Approbation. The Divine Declaration, that God will save us, if we fit ourselves for Salvation, is said to be owing to the Sacrifice of Christ; but our Right to Salvation results from that Fitness in us, and not from his Sacrifice. And, God's acquainting us, that he will save us, upon that Fitness being found in us, is an Act of Favour, and is to be ascribed to his Grace; but our Title to Salvation arises from that Fitness in us to be pardoned and saved. Men may dispute, while they please; but the Truth is, it is Salvation itself that is the Thing intended by the Apostle, and not a Declaration, that God will pardon and fare us: And he designs good Works, call them what you will, when he excludes them as a Cause of Salvation. If, therefore, any Works save us, they must not be good, but sinful Works.

**I.** *Neither is according to the Desert of our Works.* It ought to be observed, that, by Works, Obedience is intended, or Actions which are materially good. For, surely, no Man can be so stupid as to

imagine, that a direct Violation of the Law merits the Divine Regard, and entitles the Offender to Benefits: And, therefore, Works must mean Duties performed, and not Sins committed, Now, Salvation is not according to the Desert of that Obedience, which Men endeavour to yield to the Law of God. For, though Duty is good, materially considered, yet it hath the Nature of Sin in it, by Reason of the Vitiosity of the Person who performs it. And so he demerits Punishment, even in Duty, not as he attends to Duty; but as he performs it not, in that holy Manner which the Law requires him to do it. And if the best Actions of Men render them worthy of Censure, because of the wrong Manner of their Performance, it is *senseless* to imagine, that they merit the Favour of God, or thereby qualify themselves for the Reception of Benefits from him. How then can it be thought, that Salvation, or Vocation, is according to the Desert of our Works?

**II.** *Neither is according to the Nature of our Works* Such as we are in our natural Dispositions, such are all our Actions, as to their Kind. I do not mean, in Respect to the Matter of our Actions: Or that they are materially sinful. But what I intend is, that whatever we do, is, in its Kind, or as it is acted by us, congruous to the governing Disposition of our Souls. So that, in doing what is materially good, we are evil, and all our Actions have the Nature of Sin in them. Such as the Spring of Action is, such must the Action be, evil, if that is evil, though not materially, yet as proceeding from a corrupted Principle and Fountain. No Action that is properly good, can be performed by a Person, who is destitute of good Principles, any more than sweet Streams can flow from a bitter Fountain, which is impossible.

*The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, it is not subject to his Law, neither, indeed, can be* (Romans 8:7). And, *without Faith it is impossible to please God* (Hebrews 11:6). It must be concluded, therefore, that Salvation is not according to the Desert, or Nature of our Works. And this leads me to observe two Things, with Respect to our Vocation.

**III.** *It is an Act of pure Grace or free Love.* For, prior to this Work upon us, we are not the Subjects of any good Dispositions, nor are capable of performing Service, in an acceptable Manner. And, consequently, our Vocation is the mere Effect of the Grace and Mercy of God. *Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but of his Mercy hath he saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost* (Titus 3:5). *But God who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Trespasses and Sins, quickened us together with Christ* (Ephesians 2:4, 5, 6). *Blessed be the God and Father of our*

*Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead* (1 Peter 1:3).

**IV.** *Grace specifically differs from the best Thing that is in a natural Man.* An unregenerate Person may be humble, modest, affable in his Temper and Behaviour; he may maintain strict Probity and Honour, attend unto religious Duties, and have what is lovely and amiable, as the young Man of whom we read in the Gospel, concerning whom it is said, that our Lord *loved* him, *i.e.* approved of his virtuous and just Behaviour. But Grace is of a nobler Nature, than the most excellent Thing that is found in an unregenerate Person. Regeneration is not a Work upon Dispositions which are in us previous unto itself, but at as the Implantation of Principles in us, which are entirely new. And, therefore, it is represented, as giving us a *new Heart*, and a *new Spirit* within us. This it is which distinguishes us from Persons unregenerate, and makes us truly excellent. Hence the Saints are said to be the *excellent in the Earth, in whom is all Christ's Delight*. The Fruits of the Spirit are in none, before they are born of the Spirit. Grace is not the Excitation or drawing forth of natural Principles into Act, by Influences and Impulses from God; but it is a new Nature created in the Soul. For which Reason it is said: *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature; old Things are passed away, and all Things are become new* (2 Corinthians 5:17). So that, there is no Congruity between Grace and those Principles, which are in us before its Production. Nor is it communicated to us, because of any Fitness in us for it, or because we are disposed to receive it, or act agreeably unto it. Faith, Hope, Love, Fear, Humility, Meekness, and all other gracious Principles, differ specifically from all that is in us, while we are in an unregenerate State. Nor is it possible, by any Operation whatever, to cause an unregenerate Mind to believe, hope, love God, or reverence and adore him, and yield a holy spiritual Obedience unto him. The Mention which some make of a Divine Influence, in Regeneration, means no more, than stirring up natural Principles unto holy Acts; which is far from Truth, and is absurd, for Enmity cannot be made to love; that involves a Contradiction. But, by the Allowance of a Divine Influence to excite corrupt Nature unto gracious Acts, many are imposed upon, and persuaded to think, that it is ancient Truth which is meant; but it is entirely a Mistake, which might be easily discerned, if too many among us were not foolishly credulous, and disposed to entertain a favourable Opinion of some Sort of Men, who court their Esteem. I am sure it is high Time for us to be upon our Guard, if we design to retain the Truth of the Gospel. For no small Number make sad Improvement, of those Modes of

speaking on Evangelical Doctrines, which are now much come into Fashion.

But I go on to consider,

**Thirdly. The positive Assertion in the Text:** *God hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ, before the World began.*

**I.** *Purpose intends the Decree of God, which is called, the Counsel of his Will* (Ephesians 1:11); because of the Wisdom which is displayed therein, and because it is his good Pleasure, or the pure Result of his sovereign Will; he formed the Plan and Model of our Salvation, in his infinite and eternal Mind, and fixed upon all the adorable Methods, whereby it was accomplished. He willed not to impute Sin to us: *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespasses to them.* His Intention was, that Christ should come under the Law, obey it, and bring in for us an everlasting Righteousness. He decreed, that our blessed Lord Should bear our Sins, and become an atoning Sacrifice for them, that we might go unpunished, or escape that dreadful Wrath and Vengeance, whereunto we were obnoxious: And his Law and Justice sustain no Loss by our Pardon and Impunity. Again, he formed a Design and Resolution to communicate Holiness unto us, or to regenerate and sanctify us, and make us meet for the Fruition of himself.

**II.** *This is his own Purpose, properly his; for it is the Effect of his own Love without any external Motive and Inducement.* And it is his own Contrivance, peculiar to himself. He only could determine in what Way it became him to recover us from Ruin, and bring us to Glory. So wonderful is the Method of our Pardon and Salvation, that the Nature of it evinces it to be the Contrivance, not of finite, but infinite Wisdom. Whether Holiness, Righteousness, and Justice, or Kindness, Grace, and Mercy, are more illustriously displayed therein, we are not able to say, but must eternally adore the infinitely wise Provision, which is made in the Scheme of our Salvation, for the astonishing Discovery and Exercise of each, ill entire Harmony and Agreement: Mercy and Truth meet together: Righteousness and Peace kiss each other, in the Affair of our Redemption.

**(1.)** Salvation is according to this Purpose. The Father, in Pursuance of his own Decree and Christ's Undertaking, said our Iniquities upon him: And made him to be Sin for us. Agreeably to his everlasting Counsels, *when the Fulness of Time was come, he sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem us that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons* (Galatians 4:4, 5). Our Saviour's being made a Curse for us, to

redeem us from Condemnation, was according to this gracious Purpose. And the Expiation of our Guilt, by his Susception of it, and Atoning for it, was the Accomplishment of the Decree of the Father, who eternally resolved upon our Remission. The whole Order of Salvation, in all its Branches, and in Relation unto all its Subjects, is according to that Plan, which was formed in the Divine Mind. For it is of the Father that we are in Christ Jesus, and he makes him unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Hence all that our Saviour did and suffered, was the Fulfillment of the Father's Will, and the Discharge of that Work, which he gave him to do: *I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me. I bare finished the Work, which thou gavest me to do.*

Our Salvation, therefore, or our Right to Pardon, Freedom from Condemnation, and Title to Life, arising from the Obedience, and Sufferings, and Death of our blessed Lord, is according to the wise, the gracious, and sovereign Will and Counsel of the Father. And, *herein be abounded towards us, in all Wisdom and Prudence.*

(2.) Vocation is according to this Purpose of God. The Subjects of it are the Objects of his eternal Choice unto Salvation. *God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit, and the Belief of the Truth* (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Calling, therefore, is the Accomplishment of God's gracious Decree concerning us. And hence, we are said to be called according to his Purpose: *We know that all Things work together for Good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his Purpose.* Since it was the Determination of God to regenerate, sanctify, and make us meet for Heaven, or to *call us unto his eternal Glory:* Calling doubtless is effectual. For God did not purpose to work that in us, which he could not effect; nor could he design to produce Holiness in us by his powerful Influence upon us, if he knew our Nature and Make to be *unfit, or improper*, to be operated upon by his infinite Power. And, consequently, this Vocation is effectual. God intended what he knew himself able to produce: He purposed to convey to us what he knew we were capable of receiving, though not of acquiring, even with Helps and Assistances afforded to us. Capable we are of being wrought upon, by infinite Power; but capable we are not of being helped to see, because we are destitute of a visive Power; capable we are not of being assisted to act, because we have not Life, a Principle of Action. Capable we are not of being enabled to love God and Holiness, because we are Enmity against God, and all real Holiness. But we are capable of receiving, by Infusion, Light, Life, and a Principle of Love, though we are *Darkness*, are in a State of Death, and are Enmity itself against God.

It was the Purpose of God to give us new Hearts and new Spirits, as his Promise evinces; and, when a new Heart and a new Spirit is given, we are capable of being assisted to act in a holy spiritual Manner, but not before: Any more than a Man can be assisted to see, without a visive Power, or be enabled to act without Life, or a Principle of Action, or than Enmity can be assisted to love. As the Purpose of God took Place, in our Redemption: So it shall be accomplished, in Vocation, in all its Objects. And this Work must be effectual in every one, who is the Subject of it.

### **III. *Salvation and Vocation are according to "Grace", which was given us in Christ before the World began.***

**1st.** It is necessary here to enquire what is intended by *Grace*.

(1.) That sometimes means the Goodness, free Love, and Kindness of God. Thus in these Words: *By Grace are ye saved* (Ephesians 2:5). The sovereign and unmerited Favour of God, is the Origin of our Salvation. That is the Fountain of all the Branches of our Recovery and Happiness. Election to Salvation was not of Works, but of Grace. The Constitution of Christ to be our Head, Mediator, and Saviour was an Act of free Favour. The Gift of Christ to us, and for us, was an amazing Instance of rich and glorious Grace. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son* (John 3:16). It was an illustrious Act of Grace in God to deliver him up to Suffering and Death for us. *God commended his Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 8:7).

Our Redemption, or the Forgiveness of our Sins, is *according to the Riches of the Father's Grace*, as the meritorious Cause is Christ's Blood: Our Justification is a gratuitous Act: *That being justified by his Grace* (Titus 3:7). In a Word, all the Parts of our Salvation spring from the Fountain of God's good Pleasure, or his rich Mercy and Kindness. Pardon, Peace, Acceptation, Freedom from Condemnation, and our Right to eternal Life are all derived from the everlasting Love and Grace of God. Our Vocation is the Fruit and Effect thereof: *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee*. And abundant Mercy is manifested in begetting us again unto a lively Hope. The rich Mercy and great Love of God are gloriously discovered, or shine forth, in quickening us, when we are dead in Trespasses and Sins. Our Nature and Conduct are a full and irrefragable Proof of this important Truth. We are Enmity against God, and have not the least Degree of a friendly Disposition towards him, nor any Desire of an Acquaintance with him, or of enjoying him, the Origin of Blessedness. To suggest, that Men naturally have any such Desire, or can have, is the ready Way to *flatter them into Hell*, I am bold to

say it, though I am sensible, that it is absolutely contrary, to the *fashionable* Divinity of our Times. I use this Plainness and Freedom in Speaking, because I am more and more convinced, by various melancholy Things, which daily occur, that this is a Season, wherein, in an especial Manner, we ought to be *open* and *explicit*, in asserting Truth, if ever there was such a Season, since the *Christian* Name was known in the World. It is evident, that Salvation and Vocation are according to the free and unmerited Love of God. But I humbly apprehend, that is not designed here; my Reason for it is: This Grace was given us, which is a Mode of speaking, that is not properly used of the Love of God, itself. His Love was fixed upon us in Christ before the World began; but it seems to me not agreeable, strictly speaking, to say of Divine Favour, itself, that it was given us. And, therefore, I rather think, that by Grace here we are to understand,

(2.) The Effects of Divine Love, which may be called Grace, because they spring from it. And, those Effects, are all spiritual, and eternal Blessings: Or Grace and Glory, which we receive from God in this World, and shall enjoy in the next. *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ blessed us with all spiritual Blessings, in heavenly Places, in Christ.* There is no spiritual Blessing, which is not included in this Act of the Divine Father. It comprehends all and every one, Adoption, Pardon, Peace, Acceptation, Grace for our Sanctification, and Preservation in this State, and everlasting Blessedness, in the immediate Presence of God, hereafter.

**2nd.** This Grace, or these spiritual Blessings, were *given us in Christ*. This supposes that Relation, or Union, which subsisted between Christ and us, when this Act of the Father was put forth. He was our Head and Representative, and we were included in him, and represented by him. And, therefore, what was given to him for us, as standing in the Capacity of a Representative Head, with the strictest Propriety, may be said to be given to us in him. And this Act of the Father was a real Grant, Promise, and Donation of Grace, in that comprehensive Sense, which is above explained.

**3rd.** This Grant, or Donation of all spiritual Blessings, was *before the World began*: That is to say, in Eternity, or before the Commencement of Time. For this Phrase is used to express the everlasting Date of that to which it is applied: *In Hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lye, promised before the World began.* And the same Idea is expressed by another Phrase, which is much like to this, viz. before the Foundation of the World: *God blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places, in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World* (Ephesians 1:4). The Act of blessing us with all spiritual Blessings,

is, therefore, of the same Date with our Election, which is eternal. Our Non-Existence is no Objection at all to this Conferring of a Right upon us to there Blessings, any more than it is to our Election. For, if they who are not, may be chosen, they who do not at present exist, may have a Right conferred upon them unto Benefits, in one who represents them. If any shall say, this is a Collation of Right upon nothing, since they were not: I would say, God chose nothing, since they did not exist, who are supposed to be the Objects of the Divine Choice. Our Reception of Divine Blessings necessarily supposes our personal Existence; but the Conferring of a Right upon us to those Blessings, no more requires, or supposes, our present Existence, than the Divine Election of our Persons to eternal Salvation requires, or supposes, our present Existence. I confess, that I have been somewhat surprized, to hear some very intelligent Persons object, in this Manner, unto what is now pleaded for, and am persuaded, that, if they thoroughly examined, into the Nature, Force, and Consequence of Objections of this Sort, they would be convinced, that they are by no Means to be admitted. If our Faith in heavenly Mysteries is to be directed by, and accommodated unto, Rules, which pass for *Learning* among Men; I am satisfied, that it must be very incomplete, and in many other Particulars much corrupted, as well as in this Instance we have now before us.

In order to set this Doctrine in as clear a Point of Light as I can, I would propose to Consideration the following Things:

(1.) Christ was constituted a Head to us, in Eternity, by the Divine Father, with his own Consent. I suppose it will be granted, that the Covenant of Grace and Peace, wherein the Business of our Salvation was settled, provided for, and secured, was entered into, in Eternity, by the Father, and Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Surety. That Covenant was not made or entered into with him in a *private* but *public* Capacity; or, therein he was appointed to be, and, in the *Repute* of the Father, he then was, the Head and Representative of all the chosen People of God. And, consequently, the Covenant of Grace not only had Relation unto, or concerned them, and respected their final Happiness; but it was made with them in him, as their Representative in that Transaction. I have always much approved of what the Assembly of Divines say on this Subject, *viz.* *That the Covenant of Grace was made with Christ, as a Head, and with all the Elect, in him, as his Seed.* Our Saviour was set up from everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was (Proverbs 8:23): Which respects the Father's Designation and Appointment of him to be our Mediator and Head, unto which he consented, and became invested with that Office, tho' his human Nature did not then subsist, wherein he was, in the Time agreed on between the Father

and himself, to do and suffer for us, all that which, in this Covenant he stipulated to do and suffer, in order to our Security, in Subordination to the Glory of all the Divine Perfections. Upon this Designation of the Father, and his own undertaking to be our Mediator and Head, he became such in the *Divine Repute, and represented us*, notwithstanding his human Nature then subsisted not, and tho' we were not then personally existent. The Promises, therefore, which the Father made to him in this Covenant, that had Respect to us, or which express the Privileges and Blessings, which are to be received and enjoyed by us, are to be considered as made to us in him, as our Representative. If Christ was then constituted a Head, it must be concluded, that he then had Members, who were considered in him, or who were his Body, and in Union with him; for he was not a Head without Members. And it must be observed, that both the Natures of Christ are included in this his Relation to us as a Head: And, as the present Subsistence of his human Nature was not necessary unto his becoming a Head to the *Church of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven*, so our personal Existence was not necessary unto our becoming his Members. The certain future Subsistence of his human Nature was a sufficient Foundation for his Headship to us; and the certain future Existence of our Persons, was a sufficient Ground, for our becoming Members of him. If this Reasoning is not allowed of, for my Part, I am not able to discern how it was possible, that our Saviour should be a Head unto the Church of God, before the Time of his Incarnation. But, surely, it is not to be imagined, that the Church was without a Head, until Christ became incarnate. This is a farther Proof, that heavenly Mysteries are not to be limited by, nor accommodated unto, those Rules which are called *Learning among Men*; and may justly convince us that those Rules, of what Use soever they may be in other Things, in divine Truths, are, not only useless, but pernicious: Which is a proper Reason for an utter Rejection of them in Evangelical Doctrines, let some Persons say what they please in their Favour. If we will form our Notions of the sublime Mysteries of Christianity, by *Rules of Art, or human Science*, which are allowed to be of Service in reasoning upon natural Truths, I am sure, our Conceptions concerning super natural Truths must be, not only exceedingly imperfect, but also, in various Instances, certainly false: The Reason of which is evident; those Mysteries are Truths which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man* (1 Corinthians 2:9); i.e. they are Doctrines absolutely unknown to the human Mind, and are not inseparable from, nor have any Connexion with, such Truths, as Men, by the utmost Stretch of Reasoning, can acquire the Knowledge of. All Objections, therefore, unto God's eternal Acts of Favour towards us in Christ, our Head,

which proceed upon, or arise from this *Axiom*, That nothing can be predicated of a *Non-ens*, or what is not, or hath not present Being, are *fond*, and not of the least Weight.

(2.) The Father promised and gave, or made a Grant of, all those Favours and Blessings unto us in Christ, which are comprised in our full Salvation. The Covenant of Grace contains in it every saving Benefit: And, therefore, *David* says concerning that Covenant, *This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire* (2 Samuel 12:5). There is one *grand* Promise of the Gospel, which is comprehensive of every Thing that is conducive unto, and wherein our final Felicity consists, *viz.* the Promise of eternal Life. This Promise was made in Eternity: *In Hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lye, promised before the World began* (Titus 1:2). Pardon of Sin, and all that is therein included — the Acceptation of our Persons — Grace for our Regeneration, Sanctification, and Preservation in this World — and that Glory which we shall possess in the next, were promised by the Father to Christ, our Head, from everlasting, or before the World began, and unto us in him, as our Representative, in those federal Transactions which pass'd between the Divine Father and himself, as Landing in the Capacity of Mediator. What he did and suffered, in order to our Salvation, in his mediatorial Capacity, was in the Fulness of Time; but his Investiture with the mediatorial Office was before the Commencement of Time: And whatever spiritual Blessings we now receive by Faith, and all that Blessedness which we shall partake of in the future State, were given us, in Christ, in this everlasting Covenant.

(3.) Right to Grace and Glory, or unto all spiritual Blessings, arose from this Divine Grant and Promise of them to us in Christ, our Head. As by a Deed of Conveyance a Child unborn may become Heir unto an Estate, or as Right to an Inheritance arises to one not yet born by Virtue of a Deed of Conveyance, so Right to Pardon, Peace, Freedom from Condemnation, Acceptation with God, and unto Grace and eternal Glory, arises from the Divine Promise and Grant of those Blessings to us in Christ, our Head, in the everlasting Covenant. And this Grant was made to Christ on Conditions required to be performed by him, and which he stipulated to fulfil. His Performance of these Conditions, therefore, confirms our Right unto those Blessings, and ascertains our Reception of them. They are free Gifts to us; but on the Part of our Saviour they are Debt, or he hath procured them for us by doing and suffering the Will of the Fathers; on Condition of which this Grant of them was made to him, as our Surety and Head. Hence he makes a Demand of Glory in Behalf of his People: *Father, I WILL, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory,*

*which thou hast given me* (John 17:24). This Right is not known to us, is not *actionable* or *pleadable* by us, until we receive Grace from God to make as *meet* for Heaven; but the foederal Transactions of the Father and Christ inverted us with a Right to all spiritual Blessings, tho' we knew it not, nor could plead it.

#### **IV. Salvation and Vocation are according to Grace, which was given us in Christ "before the World began".**

**1st.** Salvation is according to that Grace. The Bestowment of spiritual Blessings upon us in Christ did not prevent our Apostacy, and Ruin, in Consequence thereof. *Adam* was the Head and Representative of the Elect as well as of the Non-elect, and they are equally chargeable with his Offence: They, no less than the Rest, derive a corrupt Nature from him, and nothing differ from them in the natural Dispositions of their Minds; they are Children of Wrath by Nature, even as others; and their Deportment is of the same rebellious Nature against God, as is the Behaviour of the Non-elect; and, therefore, they come under a legal Charge of Sin, are under the Sentence of the Law's Curse, and are obnoxious unto, and worthy of, eternal Death: Consequently, the Grant of spiritual Blessings unto them in Christ, as their spiritual, foederal Head, did not prevent their Ruin and Misery by Sin; but it was a gracious and effectual Provision for their Recovery out of that miserable Condition, whereinto they are involved by Guilt, original, and that which they themselves contract. The Nature, Terms, or Articles, and Promises of the Covenant of Grace most evidently suppose our Misery, as we are included in, and are Transgressors of, the Covenant of Works: And it is no Contradiction to affirm, that, according to the latter, we are *lost*, *undone*, and *miserable*, and that, according to the former, we are *safe*, *secure*, and *saved*; because with our natural Head we are included in the Covenant of Works, and in our spiritual Head we are included in the Covenant of Grace, and both at the same Time. This cannot be denied, without denying that the Church was related unto Christ, as a Head, when the Covenant of Grace was made with him; which is, perhaps, what some may be inclined to deny; but they cannot do it, without destroying the proper Foundation of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and of the Imputation of his Righteousness unto the Church of God. Our Salvation is according unto the gracious Promises made unto Christ, our Head, in this Covenant. Agreeably to the mutual Transactions of the Father and our Redeemer in the Covenant of Grace, he assumed our Nature into Union with himself, came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, obeyed that Law for us, and so brought in an everlasting Righteousness. The Father imputed our Guilt to him; he took it upon himself, or consented to bear it, and endured that Punishment,

which, according to the Constitution of the Law, was due to us, as Transgressors of it. Thus he bare our Guilt, and bare it away from us, and out of the Sight of God, as a Judge. Redemption, therefore, or the Remission of Sin, Peace, and Reconciliation, are according unto that Grace, which was promised, given, and granted to us, in Christ, in the everlasting Covenant; so also is the Justification of our Persons through the Righteousness of Christ, the Mediator of that Covenant. And, agreeably unto what was stipulated between the Father and the Son from everlasting, our Persons, while in a State of Unregeneracy, are preserved from many Dangers, which would be of fatal Consequence to us, and we are recovered from, or out of, it may be, some very threatening Sicknesses and Disorders; and so we are, in the Dispensations of Providence, preserved until the Time appointed for our partaking of the Grace and Blessings of that Covenant, wherein is the Whole of our Salvation, and all our Desire, as spiritual Persons. Hence we may learn, that none, who are included in the Covenant of Grace, are taken out of the World, before they receive Grace from God to prepare them for the Fruition of himself, nor can die in a State of Unregeneracy. And, therefore, it is a vain Objection, which some have made to the Doctrine of our Right to Salvation and Happiness by Virtue of a Divine Grant in the everlasting Covenant, that, if we die unregenerate, we could not be admitted to Heaven; for the Objection supposes what is not supposable, nor can be; because, as this Grant intitles us to eternal Life, so it gives us a Right unto, and ensures our partaking of, Grace and Holiness, as a Meetness for the Enjoyment of it. The Promise of eternal Life, which was made by God, who cannot lye, before the World began, as it gave us an unalienable Right unto that State of complete Happiness, so it secured to us a Participation of that Purity and Holiness, which are necessary, as a Preparative for the Possession of that future Blessedness, and fully proves the great Impropriety and Impertinence of this Objection to our Right unto Salvation and everlasting Life, *prior* to Faith in Christ. Sanctification is necessary to, and must precede, the Enjoyment of heavenly Bliss: *For without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* But Right to eternal Life as previous unto our Sanctification, and secures it.

**2nd.** Vocation is according unto Grace, which was given us in Christ, before the World began.

(1.) Those only are the Subjects of this Divine Work, to whom Grace was given in the everlasting Covenant: And, who those Persons are, it is easy to determine: They are the Elect, No more nor other than they are called to God's eternal Glory. Election to Salvation is the Ground and Foundation of Regeneration and Sanctification. This

gracious Decree is the Fountain of all that Purity and Holiness, which Men receive as a Meetness for Heaven: God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit. Love to God is the Fruit and Effect of Divine Love to us. We love him, because he first loved us. Heavenly Attraction springs from an Interest in the Favour of God: *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee.* Vocation is the Execution of the Decree of Election; and, therefore, they are parallel, and exactly of the same Extent. Some suppose, that the Influence of the Spirit of God upon Men, in order to Salvation, is of wider Compass than Election is: That Influence, therefore, and those Effects, whatever they be, which it produces, cannot evidence to any their Election of God: And, consequently, none can possibly know, that their Names are written in Heaven, or that they are chosen to Salvation, let their Convictions, Repentance, Trust, and Obedience be what they may: Which is a sufficient Proof of the Falshood of this Supposition; for it is not consistent with the Will of God, which is that the Heirs of Promise should have a proper Foundation for strong Consolation. If any of those who embrace this Opinion have such Consolation, I am sure, their Experience is not founded upon, but contradicts, their Principles. Besides, this Opinion supposes, that Men who have no supernatural Principle in them, may be assisted to act spiritually, which is impossible. That which opposes Grace, cannot be excited unto Act of Holiness, by any Impulse whatever.

(2.) Calling is the Communication of that Grace unto us, which was *given us in Christ, before the World began.* It was the Pleasure of the Father that *all Fulness should dwell in Christ:* That, *of his Fulness, we might receive, and Grace for Grace* (Colossians 1:19). The Donation of Grace to us, in Christ our Head, inverted us with a Right unto a Participation of it. And Regeneration is the Bestowment or actual Conveyance of that to us, which he received and had in keeping for us, as the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace. Vocation, therefore, is according to that Grace, unto which we had a *previous* Right, by Virtue of a divine Grant and Promise, in the everlasting Covenant. (John 1:16.)

(3.) That Grace, which was given us in Christ, is very comprehensive. For, it includes those spiritual Blessings which we receive now, and shall enjoy hereafter. Grace bears the Name of Glory: *But we all with open Face, beholding in as a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory* (2 Corinthians 3:18), *i.e.* from one Degree of Grace to another. And Glory is called Grace: *And hope to the End, for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 3:12). It is so called, because it springs from the free Grace of God. Grace

is the same in *Kind* with Glory, and is the Beginning of everlasting Life: *He that Believeth hath everlasting Life*, not only in Title, but also in the Seed and Beginning of it. So much Grace, therefore, as you have in your Hearts, *so much you have of Heaven*. And, if you are now Partakers of Grace, you shall enjoy future Bliss: For the Father *hath given Power to Christ over all Flesh, that he might give eternal Life to as many as he hath given him* (John 17:3).

# SERMON 17

## THE TRUE SENSE OF ATONEMENT FOR SIN, BY CHRIST'S DEATH,

STATED AND DEFENDED; IN ANSWER TO A PAMPHLET,  
INTITLED, '*THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT  
EXAMINED*' BY MR. TAYLOR, OF NORWICH

WITH *An APPENDIX, CONTAINING*

*An ANSWER to the OBJECTIONS of an anonymous Author to the  
Doctrine of SATISFACTION, in a Pamphlet, intitled,*

*Second Thoughts concerning the Sufferings and Death of CHRIST, etc.*

### THE PREFACE

*As some Remarks on Mr. Taylor's Piece have been published very  
lately, the Reader may reasonably expect an Account from me why I  
now appear, wherein I am willing to gratify him.*

The Author of those Remarks, is not fond of the Use of the Word Imputation, on the Subject of Christ's Obedience and Sufferings; though he thinks it may be safely applied to both, as Dr. Doddridge hath explained it, *i.e. explained it away. He consents to the Truth of false Representation of our Opinion by Mr. Taylor, viz.* that we think the Death of Christ made God merciful; and wishes, that what he has said, to correct that Mistake, may not be without Effect. *I am not sensible, that any Person ever imagined this. Mr. Hampton grants,* that the Sufferings of Christ were not penal, and that there is not a natural Connection between his Death and Remission of Sin; but that his Death is a Ground of our Redemption from Death, through the Will and Appointment of God; *as any insignificant Action might have been. This is plainly giving up the Doctrine of proper Satisfaction for sin, or of real Atonement for it. I have some other Reasons for my Dissatisfaction, with Mr. Hampton's Remarks; but I shall not trouble the Reader with them. I suppose, enough is mentioned to convince, that, if our Opinion on this important Point is to be defended, no Occasion was administered by these Remarks, to stifle what I had prepared in answer, to Mr. Taylor. I chearfully refer my Thoughts on this glorious Subject to the Approbation, or Censure of such Persons as have a proper Conviction of the evil Nature and just Demerit of Sin, a true Sense of the Holiness of God, and his righteous Displeasure with moral Evil; who are willing to be determined by the Holy Scriptures, without wresting them, in their*

*Sentiments concerning this Doctrine, of which we can know, nothing at all, but by Revelation.*

## **CHAPTER 1 - SOME THINGS PREMISED, RELATING TO THE SUBJECT**

I FREELY grant, that the Doctrine of Atonement, or Satisfaction for Sin, by the Death of Christ, is not to be explained, by any Judicial Procedures among Men. If it might be illustrated and confirmed by Rules, which do, or can lawfully obtain in human Conduct, towards the Innocent in a Way of Penalty, and towards the Innocent in Consequence thereof: That Doctrine could not reasonably be represented, as a Mystery, which it is by the Sacred Writers. It is called *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, the hidden Wisdom: And the deep Things of God.*

**I.** I will allow, that human Governments have no *Power, or Right*, to charge an innocent Person with the Crimes of any Offender, and inflict Punishment on him in his Stead.

And that no Man hath *Power over himself*, either in his *Members* or his *Life*, lawfully to consent to suffer *Mutilation, or Death*, or any kind of *corporal* Punishment, in the Room of a guilty Person.

The Reason of both is very clear to me; Rulers as well as Subjects are under a Law, which is *superior* to any they have Power to enact, and by which their Constitutions ought, in all Instances, to be directed; *viz. natural Justice*, according to which, Innocency ever is to be protected, and Guilt *alone* punished. And, as a Power to punish results from Guilt only, the infliction of Penalty is, in Equity, limited to its own proper Subject, and never ought to be extended farther, it is as just to punish *without* the Being of Guilt at all, as it is to punish, in any Degree, a Person wholly clear of that Guilt, for which the Law directs unto the Infliction of Penalty. Nor is Guilt transferable from one Man to another, as pecuniary Debts are. This is not pretended.

**II.** As various of the Terms, which are sometimes used on the Subject of the Atonement of Christ, are borrowed from the *Civil Law*; it may not be improper to enquire into the Sense of them.

**1. Novation:** That designs taking away a *former* Obligation, by a new Stipulation or Agreement, wherein the Consent of the Creditor is required and given. This hath Place in the Affair of Christ's Death. For, according to the Law, we, the Transgressors, were bound over to Punishment for our Crimes; but God, of his infinite Mercy, freed us from that Obligation, by admitting Christ to be our Surety: Or, in

virtue of his Stipulation, we are let free, and he became *responsible* unto God for us. This was an Act of Sovereignty in God.

**2. Satisfaction:** This is a Term, that is also borrowed from the *Civil Law*, and it intends a Creditor's accepting what is offered and paid to him, by, or in Behalf of a Debtor, though it is not what he might, according to the Obligation, have demanded. *Satisfaction*, therefore, does not necessarily imply a *full Payment*, for that may be, where the latter is not. When we use the Word on this Subject, we mean, that no Demand will, or can be made upon us, because God agreed to accept of the Payment of our Debt by *Jesus Christ*, and he hath discharged it, or made good his Engagement in our Behalf. The Death of Christ is to be considered, as the *procatalectic Cause*; and *Satisfaction*, as the Effect.

**3. Acceptilation:** That imports a Creditor's agreeing to accept *another Thing*, or *less* than what is in the Obligation, whereby the Debtor is no less freed from the Obligation he was under, than if the *Idem*, or same, was paid, that the Obligation expresses. This is, indeed, understood of Obligation by Words among *Civilians*, and is not *properly* applicable to this Affair. But some do at least allude unto it: Yet they allow not that Force unto *Acceptilation* in this Matter, which, according to the Opinion of *Civilians*, it contains in it, *viz. The Removal of the Obligation*. If it should not so do, in this Business, Christ would be injured; for it is not just to require an innocent Person to die in the *Room* of the Guilty, and suffer the Obligation to remain on him.

**4. Solution:** This is the *Payment* of what is in the Obligation, from whence *Satisfaction*, by Right, follows. *Satisfaction*, as has been observed, may be, where *Solution* is not, because the Creditor may be content with receiving less than he had a Right to require: But *Satisfaction* must needs be, where there is *Solution*, because, in Right, the Creditor can make no farther Demand. And this is the Case, in this Affair. For Christ paid the *Idem*, or the same that was in our Obligation. We stood obliged to suffer the Curse of the Law, and that includes the whole Penalty our Sins demerit; no farther Punishment is due to Sin, than what is contained in the Law's Curse: And, therefore, the Death of Christ was a *proper* and *full Payment of our Debt*; consequently, it must be *satisfactory* to God, our righteous Judge. God might have insisted upon Payment from us, and not have accepted of the Engagement of another for us; but since, by *Novation*, he dissolved our Obligation, or admitted of a Surety, his Payment of what was required in the Obligation upon the Ground of Justice, gives us a Right to Impunity. And, therefore, when it is said that the *Satisfaction* of Christ was *refusale*, we must be careful, that we understand it in a right Sense.

(1.) If by it is meant, that God was at Liberty to admit, or not admit of his *Sponsion*, or *Engagement for us*, it is true. For he might justly have retained us under the Obligation, and *not have allowed* of the Payment of our Debt by a Surety. The *Acceptation* of his Undertaking for us was an Act of sovereign Favour, and, therefore, it is, that we are said to be freely forgiven, although our Surety discharged our whole Debt.

But, (2.) If by it is intended, that what Christ suffered for us was *refusable*, or might not have been accepted, or allowed to be the *Solution* of our Debt, it is most false; because he suffered that Curse which the Law threatened, and he was, in his Person, such as gave that Worth unto his Death, which the Justice of God required, unto Sufferings *satisfactory for Guilt*. The Appointment of Christ to suffer, in our Stead, was an amazing Act of sovereign Mercy, Kindness, and Grace; but the Acceptation of his Sufferings, for our Discharge, was an *Act of Justice*, because they were, both in *Kind* and *Value*, what that required, in Case of a Violation of the Law.

And, therefore, it is a Mistake to think, that, God having required his Son to die for us, he may, that notwithstanding, only grant unto us Terms, or Conditions of Pardon, and, for Want of our Performance of those Conditions, impute our Guilt to us, and inflict upon us the Penalty our Sins deserve.

It is Matter of Favour to be content with *the Payment of less than is due*; but of Right to be satisfied with *the Payment of the Whole*, which can in *Justice* be demanded, whether it be by the *Principal* or *Surety*.

The Agreement between God and Christ, as our Surety, did not render his Sufferings available to procure the Pardon of Sin; if so, then, their Value is not *intrinsic*; but is *extrinsical* only, or it is of *arbitrary* Appointment. His Death was the Result of the sovereign Decree of God, and of his own free and voluntary Engagement to submit to the sovereign Pleasure of the Father. But the *Merit*, *Virtue*, and *Efficacy* of his Sacrifice to take away Sin, or attone for our Guilt, spring not from any Agreement between God, our righteous Judge, and Christ, our Surety. The Merit of it arises wholly from the Nature of his Sufferings, as they were *properly penal*, and the *infinite Dignity* of his Person. As the *infinite* Demerit of Sin is not the Effect of the Divine Will, but results from the *infinite Greatness* of God, against whom it is committed: So the Value of Christ's Sufferings is not of Divine Constitution and Appointment; but it is the proper and necessary Result of the *infinite Dignity* of the Person of the Sufferer. Hence it follows, that the Compact between God and Christ did not give Merit to his Death and Sacrifice, nor constitute

how far, and unto what Ends, it should be accepted, on our Account: But *merely* his Act of offering himself a Sacrifice for our Sins. Sovereign Love to our Persons determined upon his becoming a Sacrifice for us, and Justice grants those Effects, which that Sacrifice, because of its *intrinsic Worth* without an *arbitrary Appointment*, merits at the Hand of God, our Lawgiver and Judge.

**III.** It is a Consideration of great Importance, that God acted in this Business, *merely in a sovereign Manner*, both towards us, and towards our Saviour.

**1.** *Towards us.* His Resolution to pardon and save us was an Act of his Goodness; but it was his Goodness acting in an *arbitrary Way*: For it is not Goodness *merely* that ordains the Salvation of a criminal Creature; if it was, it would be contrary to Divine Goodness to inflict Punishment on Sinners, which certainly it is not, and, therefore, this was a free Act of God's Will: Or a Purpose of Grace, which is wholly to be attributed to his *absolute Pleasure*. It was not a *natural Act* of his Goodness, as his rewarding Innocence is; but a free and sovereign Act of Clemency and Favour.

**2.** *Towards Christ.* The Divine Decree to punish Sin was an Act of Justice; but the Decree of punishing it in him was an Act of Sovereignty. The Justice of this Decree is apparent, in that Respect was had unto Sin, as the meritorious Cause of Penalty: And the Sovereignty of that Divine Purpose clearly shines, in fixing upon Christ to be the Subject of the Punishment Sin demerits. It was not a free Act of the Divine Will to decree to punish Sin; if it was, God might have decreed to permit the Creature eternally to sin against him, without suffering any Punishment for his Rebellion. But it was a *free and sovereign Act* of his Will to decree, that Christ should bear Sin, and suffer the Penalty due unto it. Justice directs to the Punishment of Sin, as what is fit and *proper*. Sovereignty appointed and provided the innocent subject, on whom Penalty was inflicted, in order to our Pardon and Impunity. So that Sovereignty is that, from which our Salvation *originally* springs, into which it must be *entirely resolved*, and whereupon it *absolutely* rests. And, if we deprive God of his *Sovereignty*, we must *inevitably* damn ourselves. For that alone could provide for our Recovery and Salvation. Hence,

(1.) We see the Reason why no finite Mind could ever have thought of this Method of saving Sinners. All Acts of Goodness and Justice which proceed not *naturally* from those Attributes in God, but are *free and sovereign* Acts of his Will, must be undiscoverable by Reason; because it hath no Rule to guide it into the Knowledge of such Acts as spring from *Sovereignty alone*. And, therefore, it is proper to infinite Wisdom to contrive the Way of our Salvation. And

such a *Mystery* this is, as will eternally fill the Minds of Angels and Saints, with holy *Adoration*.

(2.) This will enable us to discern, why our Lard put his Sufferings wholly upon the Will of God, and why his Sacrifice was so pleasing unto him. He put his Sufferings wholly upon the Will of God; because, tho' it was *natural* to God to will to punish Sin, it was a free Act of his Will to impute Sin to him, and punish him for it. The Sacrifice of Christ was infinitely pleasing unto God; because his Will was therein subjected to the Will of God, in such Sort, as the Will of no Angel or Saint is, or ever will be. This was such an Act of Obedience, as never was, nor ever will be required of any Creature. And herein God was more honoured by our blessed Lord, in all his glorious Perfections, than he will be, by the Sufferings of the Damned, or the Obedience of Angels and Saints unto Eternity. This, among other Considerations, is the Reason why the Sacrifice Christ offered, was of a *sweet-smelling Savour unto God*; not merely as Sufferings, but as submitted unto, with his whole Soul, out of a Regard unto his Glory, as a *gracious, holy, and just God*.

(3.) Hence we also discern, that there was an *intrinsic* Worth and Efficacy in the Sacrifice of Christ. According to Mr. *Taylor*, what Virtue it had, or which he is pleased to allow unto it, (that I intend to consider, with the Assistance of the Grace of him, whose this Sacrifice is) arose from the Will and Appointment of God. If so, then there was no *intrinsic* Virtue in it to answer any important End, either respecting God, to whom it was offered, or Men for whom it was offered. And, consequently, God is no more honoured in any of his Attributes, in the Salvation of Men, than if he had saved them, without requiring this Sacrifice; nor do any Advantages accrue to Men from it, that they might not as well have enjoyed without it. Which Supposition is such a Reflection on the Wisdom of God, who appointed Christ to suffer and die, as would certainly cause Men to blush who advance it, if they were not wholly given over to Blindness and Stupidity. As our Saviour, in his Sufferings, was, in such an unparalleled Manner, obedient to the Father's Will, his Death hath Virtue and Efficacy in itself, *independent of any Act of the Divine Will*, to attain the great Ends whereunto it was designed. This Transaction was the Effect of the sovereign Will of God; but the Worth, Virtue, and Efficacy of his Death and Sacrifice are intrinsic, and not of *arbitrary* Appointment. If it was, God might have willed his Death, without decreeing it should answer any important End, either respecting himself, or Men; and he certainly did, for aught we know, Besides, was it possible for infinite Goodness, Holiness, and Wisdom, to will the Sufferings of the innocent *Jesus* to an End, which they, in their own Nature, had no

Virtue or Efficacy at all to answer? but it is wholly of arbitrary Appointment, that such an End is answered by his Sufferings and Sacrifice.

They are but *swelling Words of Vanity* which those Men use, concerning the Goodness of God, in this Affair, who deny the *real Merit* of the Sacrifice of Christ. If Divine Goodness is, as they say it is, exalted gloriously, in freely pardoning Sin, without Satisfaction for it, and the Death of Christ could not, nor was intended to satisfy for Sin, nor had any Virtue in *itself*; but, what Efficacy soever it hath, *it is extrinsical*, and of *Divine Appointment only*; then how is Goodness displayed in delivering him up to Suffering and Death for us? Towards Christ it was an Act of *Severity*, and to us no Instance of Goodness, which was at all necessary to our Pardon and Salvation. For the Death of Christ could not be *necessary* to our Remission, if it had no *intrinsic Worth* in it, *meritorious* of Forgiveness. There was no Goodness manifested to us Sinners, in the Gift of Christ for us, if his Death had no *intrinsic Virtue* in it: All the Kindness, which can be pretended in this Matter towards us, is God's Decreeing, that his Death shall be a *Condition*, or *Reason* of our Pardon, without any Virtue in it to take away, or atone for our Guilt. And *such a Virtue as this*, God might have assigned unto the *Death of any Martyr*, or even of a *Beast* offered to him in Sacrifice, if that had been his Pleasure. For such Virtue is assignable to another Person or Thing, if it is assignable unto Christ.

**IV.** The Government of the Jews was *Theocratical*, or a *Theocracy*: God took upon himself the Government of that People. And,

**1.** He gave them a perfect Law, which required the Practice of all Holiness, and forbid every Sin. *God*, who is infinitely holy, cannot require less than perfect Purity, however depraved the Subjects of his Rule are. He can make no Allowance for their Weaknesses, Temptations, or Occasions to Evil.

**2.** His Law threatened Sin with Death. *The Soul that sins shall die*. And this Threatening respected every Sin, and all Degrees of Sin. So that every Deviation from the Rule of Duty, and the Want of perfect Conformity to the Law, in the Manner of the Performance of it, subjected to that awful Menace. If, as their King, he had proceeded according to this Law, no Man among them could have enjoyed any Favour, or even Life; and therefore,

**3.** God appointed the Offering of Sacrifices to make Atonement for Sin, in many Cases. Wherein we may observe,

**(1.)** He did not charge or impute Guilt unto the Offerer of those Sacrifices, as the Governor of that People.

(2.) Nor were they subject unto the Commination of Death, upon their Offering those Sacrifices. But,

(3.) Were to be continued in Life, and in the Enjoyment of such Favours and Privileges, as were granted unto them by God, who took upon himself the Rule over them, as a Nation. The Law of Sacrifices was, therefore, *political*; but intended of God, if the divine Writer to the *Hebrews* mistakes not their Meaning, as *Types* of far greater Things than any they *really* contained, *viz.* the actual Removal of Guilt, Freedom from the Condemnation, and Curse of the Law, and Escaping Divine Vengeance.

4. Some Sins were not to be atoned for by Sacrifices, in this *political* and *typical* Sense; but the guilty Persons must suffer *corporal* Death for those Crimes, *viz. Murder, Adultery, Blasphemy, etc.*

5. Sacrifices were appointed for some *atrocious Crimes*, *viz. Defiling a Servant-maid, Theft, and Perjury*; and therefore it is not true, that they were instituted only for *common* Frailities, and Sins of *Ignorance*. *Leviticus 5:1, Leviticus 6:4, 5, Leviticus 19:20.*

6. The anniversary Sacrifice was offered for Sins of all Sorts, as the Terms used concerning it do clearly and abundantly evince, *Iniquities and Transgressions in all their Sins*. Those Terms include all Sorts of Sins, which was intended to signify, that a spiritual Atonement was to be made even for such Offences, on Account of which, the guilty Person must suffer *corporal* Death, according unto that Law, which was the *Instrument of the Jewish Polity*. As to the *temporal* Life of that People, it was preserved or forfeited, as they were innocent or guilty of such Crimes, for which no Sacrifices were appointed of God: But that was not the Rule according to which God proceeded in the Business of Salvation. If it had been so, no *Murderer, etc.* could have been pardoned and saved.

It was the Design of the Institution of Sacrifices for *lesser* Crimes, to teach that People, that the Remission of them, *small*, as they might be inclined to esteem them, could not be without Atonement made: And the Institution of the anniversary Sacrifice furnished them with a Ground of Hope of the Pardon of such Crimes, for which those, who were guilty of them, must suffer *corporal* Death. And this seems to be one Reason, why the *Author* of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* particularly observes, that that anniversary Sacrifice could not *take away Sin*, in order to prove the Necessity of another. That being more comprehensive than the others, it was most apposite to his Purpose to instance in that, for that Reason; and for that Reason, chiefly, it was so, *Leviticus 16:16, 21.*

Yet, it also seems to be instanced in, with a farther View, *viz.* to prove the Necessity of another Sacrifice to be offered for lesser Sins, than what the *Levitical* Law required. For, in this anniversary Sacrifice, there was a *Remembrance* even of such Sins, for which other Sacrifices had been before offered. And, therefore, tho' the Offerer was not liable to Penalty, by the *political* Law, yet he could not plead his Pardon in a higher View, by Virtue of that Sacrifice which he offered before unto God; neither could he by Virtue of this anniversary one, for that must be repeated at the Return of the Year.

7. That Law, Commandment, or Covenant which consisted of the *Moral*, *Ceremonial*, and *Judicial* Laws given unto that People, did not contain, promise, or convey *real, spiritual* Remission, Peace, and Reconciliation to Sinners. It was impossible, that those Blessings should be enjoyed by Virtue of that Constitution, wherein there was neither a Priest fit to make *real spiritual* Atonement for Sin, nor any Sacrifice offered, which could be of Efficacy unto so important an End. *The Law made nothing perfect*, neither Persons nor Things; neither those who officiated in Divine Service, nor them for whom they acted, in the Execution of the sacerdotal Office. Hence the inspired Writer speaks of the Whole of their Service in such depreciating Terms as he does, *viz.* *carnal Ordinances, weak and beggarly Elements; the Rudiments of the World; a Shadow, and not the Image*. The highest Excellency and Glory of all that *Apparatus* of Service was its *typical* Relation unto the glorious Things promised, exhibited, and conveyed in another, and infinitely better Covenant, which is abundantly proved in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*.

8. The new Covenant promises, contains, and conveys those glorious Things themselves, which the Law was a *typical* Representation of, and no more: Nothing greater or nobler, can be attributed unto it. And those Things are *real spiritual* Remission, eternal Redemption, Reconciliation, Freedom of Access unto God, and the everlasting Enjoyment of him, by Virtue of the Blood of this Covenant. As it was not an Offer of *political* Pardon that was obtained by legal Sacrifices, but Pardon *itself*, in that Sense: So the Blood of Christ procured not an Offer of Remission, but Remission *itself*, taken in that Sense which is *proper* and *peculiar* unto the new Covenant, wherein his Sacrifice was appointed and provided. The Blood of *Bulls* and of *Goats* availed unto the Procurement of *political* Pardon of Sin, according to the *old* Covenant, and not unto an Offer of Forgiveness: And the *precious* Blood of our dear Lord *Jesus* obtained for us *real* Pardon in a spiritual Sense, and not an Offer of it, according to that *better Covenant, which is established upon better Promises*. These Things serve fully to discover the

*Fallacy and inconclusive Nature of the Reasoning of the Socinians,* on the momentous Subject of the Satisfaction of Christ. What Force is there in those Arguments, which are drawn from the *Levitical* Sacrifices, to prove the Non-imputation of Sin to him? That he did not suffer the Penalty our Guilt demerits? And that *real spiritual* Remission results not from his Death? None at all. Since that whole Oeconomy only was a *Shadow* and *obscure Representation* of these Matters, it is not to be expected, that we can find the Things *themselves* therein. And, because they were only *typical* of those Things, therefore was it necessary, that there should be another Priest to act for us, *in Things pertaining to God*. Another Sacrifice was *absolutely* needful to be offered, in order to make *proper, real,* and *spiritual* Atonement for Sin. *Real Spiritual* Atonement was not, nor could be made by any, or *all the Rites of the first Covenant*; nor was it the Intention of that Covenant to supply the *Federates* with *real spiritual* Pardon. That Pardon was not *spiritual*, but *typical* only of *such* Remission; and that Atonement was *homogeneous*, or *typical* only. As the new Covenant dispenses *real spiritual* Pardon, so *real spiritual* Atonement is made by the Sacrifice, which that Covenant provides.

## CHAPTER 2 - OF CHRIST'S BEARING SIN

**I.** As I intend, in this Chapter, to prove the Imputation of our Sins to Christ, I would first enquire into the Ground of the Charge of our Guilt to him, and of his Bearing it for us. If no Foundation can be shewn, whereon our Crimes might, in Justice, be placed to his Account, I readily acknowledge, that the Opinion of his bearing our Sin is indefensible, and it must necessarily sink, together with our Hope of Salvation by him. But, blessed be God, our Hopes of Remission, by Virtue of his Sacrifice, are built upon a most solid Basis. For, Christ and the Church constitute one *mystical* Person. He is the Head, and his People are the Members: Or such a Union subsists between him and them, as is a proper Foundation for the Act of the Imputation of their Sins to him. And he is their Surety. *By so much was Jesus made the Surety a better Testament* (Hebrews 7:22). A Surety is one who undertakes to pay, suffer, or do something for others, either because they are *defective* in Credit, or Ability. Thus *Judah became Surety to his Father for his Brother Benjamin: I will be Surety for him; of my Hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the Blame*, (or *I will be Sin, i.e. accounted guilty*) *for ever* (Genesis 43:9). And the Apostle *Paul* undertook to satisfy *Philemon* both for Wrong and Debt, in Behalf of *Onesimus*: *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aright, put that on mine Account, I will repay it* (Philemon 1:18,

19). *Judah's Sponsion* respected the Security of the Person of his Brother: The Apostle's related unto the Satisfaction of *Philemon*, for Wrong and Debt. The Suretyship of Christ includes both: The Safety of the Persons of his People, and the Payment of their Debt, or making Satisfaction for that Wrong which they have done.

The latter is here principally intended, which was Christ's undertaking to accomplish the Will of the Father in our Redemption: *Then said I, Lo, I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me: I delight to do thy Will, O my God: yea, thy Law is within my Heart* (Psalm 40:7, 8). The Father's Will, and his own voluntary Engagement, brought upon him an Obligation to suffer and die: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these Things* (Luke 24:26)? And, therefore, it is false, which one asserts, *viz.* that *Christ was not under a moral Obligation to suffer for us*. This Sponsion is the Ground of the Imputation of our Sins to him, and of the Infliction of Penalty upon him.

Mr. T. objects several Things to evade the Evidence, which is given unto this important Truth, where Christ is expressly called a Surety. Says he, 1. *This is the only Place where he is so called*. He is no less truly a Surety, than if he had been so called in a thousand Places. One express Testimony from God is a sufficient Evidence of Truth. 2. *Not our Surety*. It is not difficult to determine whole Surety he is, and must be. He is the Surety of the *defective* Party in the Covenant, which is not God, but us. 3. *A Surety is one who undertakes for the Performance of a Promise*. 1. This is but an imperfect Account of a Surety. *Judah* was a Surety for his Brother unto his Father, but did not undertake for the Performance of any Promise of his. 2. It is *blasphemous* to imagine, that God had Need of a Surety, to secure the Performance of his Promises, or to assure us by his Sponsion of their Fulfilment. No Creature can be of equal Credit or Ability, with God. And such only Mr. T. thinks Christ is. 3. He confounds *Mediation and Suretyship*. A Person may be a Mediator, and yet not be a Surety. *Moses* was the former, but not the latter. Christ is both Mediator and Surety. Again, Christ is a Surety in the Discharge of his sacerdotal Office, as the Words evidently suppose. And, therefore, he offered himself a Sacrifice, as a Surety: Or that Act was a Fulfilment of his Sponsion. *Schilctingius* was aware of this, and endeavours to enervate the Force of the Argument, taken from hence to prove, that Christ is our Surety; but it is in a very *weak* and *frivolous* Manner. His Reason, that we did not send Christ, is trifling. For, not his Mission, but his Undertaking makes him a Surety. If Christ acted as a Surety, in the offering of himself a Sacrifice for Sin, that was the Matter of his Undertaking, in his Sponsion, and he must be our Surety, and not God's: And that he did so, is evident,

because he is a Surety, as he is inverted with, and acts in the priestly Office.

**II.** In his bearing Sin, we may observe the Act of the Father, which was the Imputation of our Sins to him, or placing that Wrong we have done to his Account. This is clearly expressed: *The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all*. Iniquities mean sinful Actions, the same as *Transgressions*, for which he was *wounded*. No Instance can be produced, where (עֵין) Iniquity intends Suffering, *merely*, or in an *abstracted* Consideration from Guilt, as the Cause of Suffering. He made our Iniquities to *meet*, or *fall* upon Christ; so (פָגַע) is sometimes rendered. The same Thought is expressed in these Words: *When thou shalt make his Soul* (מְשֹׁאָל) *Guilt*, or *Sin*, as it is sometimes translated. Christ could not become a Sacrifice for Sin, without a Charge of Guilt or Sin to him. And this Point of Doctrine is asserted by the Apostle: *He hath made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin*. The Sufferings of Christ were the Consequence of the Imputation of Sin unto him; hence, in Suffering, he *was made a Curse*, which he could not be, in Justice, considered as innocent.

**III.** Two Acts of Christ are observable, with Respect to his bearing Sin.

1. The Susception of it. He took it upon himself: Or fully and freely consented unto the Charge of our Guilt to him. This Act is expressed by the Word (שָׁבַע); *he bare the Sin of many*. In various Places the *Septuagint* render this Word by, (λαμβάνω) which is used to express Taking upon, or Receiving, as may be seen in the *Margin*. Our blessed Saviour received our Guilt, by consenting unto the Imputation of it to himself.

2. He bare it as a Burden; so the Word (סִכְלָה) whereby his Bearing of Sin is expressed, properly signifies: *He shall bear* (יִסְכַּל) *their Iniquities* (*Isaiah 53:11*). He stood under the heavy Load of our Guilt, until it was fully atoned for, which would have sunk us deeply into the *infernal* Pit. The former Word expresses his Taking Sin upon him, and this represents his Standing under that *massy* Weight. Several Things may be observed, which confirm the Thought of Christ's bearing the Guilt of Sin, in Suffering for it.

(1.) *Making his Soul Guilt, and causing our Iniquities to meet in, or fall upon him*, express an Act of God, which is distinct from *Bruising and Putting him to Grief*; and, therefore, they design an Imputation of Sin, in order to suffering Punishment.

(2.) He bare that which we *have Conscience of*, which must be Guilt. That which our Consciences are purged from, by the Blood of Christ, he bare in his Sufferings for us, which is Sin or Guilt.

(3.) He bare that for which Sacrifices were offered, and that must be Sin committed. Hence, in Opposition to the *legal* Sacrifices, it is said of him, that *he was once offered to bear the Sin of many*, without which *he will appear the second Time*.

(4.) Christ bare that which there was a *Remembrance* of in the anniversary Sacrifice, which was Guilt contracted.

(5.) He bare that, which, the Blood of *Bulls* and *Goats* could *not take away*, *viz.* our Guilt, or Sin, which we have committed. I think, that a proper Consideration of the Scope and Connexion of the Divine Writer, in the 9th *Chapter of Hebrews*, and the Beginning of the 10th, will be sufficient to convince of the Truth of these Things.

(6.) The Death of Christ could not be *penal*, without an Imputation of Guilt to him, as the meritorious Cause of his suffering and Death. For, where no Charge of Sin is, no *Penalty* can be inflicted, in Justice. And, therefore, when Christ suffered Punishment, or was made a Curse for us, he was made Sin, by the Imputation of our Sins to him.

**IV.** Mr. Taylor is pleased to observe, That *there are nine Bearers of Sin*. I. *God* (*Exodus 32:32; Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18;*

*Joshua 24:19; Psalm 25:18; Psalm 32:1, etc.*). i.e. he forgives it. 1. He imputed it to Christ. 2. Punished Sin in him, when he was made a Curse. 3. Acquits us of our Guilt. 2. *Christ* (*Isaiah 53:11, 12*). How he bare Sin hath been shewn, 1. Our Lord took upon himself, or received our Guilt, in consenting unto the Charge of it to him. 2. Bare it as a Burden, laid on him by God. 3. *The Angel who was with the Israelites in the Wilderness* (*Exodus 18:21*). This was Christ. And Pardoning Sin is intended, as we translate the Word. 4. *The Priests and Levites* (*Exodus 28:38; Leviticus 10:17; Numbers 17:1-23*), i.e. ministerially, or as they performed those sacrificial Services, which were appointed to take away Sin, in a *typical* Sense. 5. *Such who were offended* (*Genesis 50:17; Exodus 10:17; 1 Samuel 15:25-1; Samuel 25:28*). This designs Forgiveness. 6. *The Scape-Goat* (*Leviticus 16:22*). That is to say, *typically*. 7. *The Criminals themselves* (*Leviticus 7:18, etc.*). 1. Sin was imputed to them. 2. They suffered Punishment. 8. *The Children of the Israelites bore the Sins of their Parents* (*Numbers 14:33*);

*Lamentations 5:7*). 1. They were not, nor could be considered innocent. 2. It was Punishment which they suffered. 9. *The Prophet Ezekiel*. Unto what Purpose this last Instance is produced, it is

difficult to conjecture, and he seems to be entirely at a Loss, how to improve it to his Advantage.

V. The *Author* proceeds to make Observations, on his *laboured* Collection of Texts, wherein Bearing Sin is mentioned.

1. *No Levitical Sacrifice is ever said to bear Sin. The Scape-Goat did bear Sin; but it was not sacrificed, or slain.* Answ. 1. The Imposition of Hands on the Sacrifice, there is Reason to think, was attended with an Acknowledgment of Guilt. 2. If those Sacrifices did not bear Sin, why are they called (כָּנָעַן) Guilt, or Sin? 3. The *Scape-Goat*, which he allows bore Sin, belonged unto the anniversary Sacrifice, and by that was Atonement made (Leviticus 16:10) 4. Not to mention any of the *Stories* which the *Jewish Writers*, relate, concerning the *Scape-Goat*, two Things are to be observed in real spiritual Atonement for Sin, *viz.* the Punishment of it in Christ, and its Removal. The slain Goat *typically* represented the former, and the *Scape-Goat* the latter. As the anniversary Sacrifice was more comprehensive, or of greater Extent than the other Sacrifices, in that Atonement which was made by it for Sin: So there was in it a fuller *typical Representation of spiritual Atonement* than in any other. The slain Goat typified Christ's Sufferings, and the *Scape- Goat* his Removal of our Guilt, thereby, from us, and out of the Sight of God as a Judge.

2. *When the great God is said to bear Sin, the Meaning, I apprehend, must be that he took or carried it away, for this is a common and current Sense of the Word (נָשַׁא)* Answ. 1. I grant that the Word is often to be understood in that Sense. But, 2. He must allow, that it is also used to express Taking up and Bearing. 3. Let us consider, how God takes or carries away Sin. Is it making that undone, which is done? No, for that implies a Contradiction. Is it taking away the criminal Action, *physically* considered? No, that is impossible. Is it reckoning or accounting the Sinner not to have committed the criminal Acts, which are taken away? No, for that is contrary to Truth. It is not imputing, or not reckoning those Actions to him, as *relatively* considered, or as Breaches of his holy Law. Hence, the Apostle expresses Pardon thus: *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin.* 4. Though God cannot otherwise bear Sin, than by pardoning it; Christ could, and did take it upon himself, and bear it as a Burden, in order to take it away, by making Satisfaction for it. He adds, סְכִיל, too, *Isaiah 53:11, will admit the Sense of carrying off, or away, Isaiah 46:4. Even I will carry you off and I will deliver you.* This Word is also used, *Isaiah 53:4. He hath carried our Sorrows; which, doubtless, St. Matthew (Matthew 8:17.)*

*understood in the Sense of removing, or carrying off, when he saith, himself took [away] our Infirmitie, and bare [carried off] our Sicknesse. Answ.* 1. He well knows, that this Word properly signifies to bear, sustain, or carry, as a Man bears a Burden; nor can he produce an Instance, where it is used in a *different* Sense. 2. Bearing in *Isaiah* 46:4, is a distinct Act from delivering, which is afterwards promised, and therefore the Sense of carrying off, cannot be admitted in that Place. 3. That Sense cannot be allowed in *Isaiah* 53:4, because it is evidently the Design of the Prophet to represent, or express what our Saviour endured, or underwent for us. 4. *Matthew* did not understand the Term in that Sense, for he renders it by a *Greek* Word, which signifies to bear, (*ο αιρων*) as a Man bears a Load. 5. Christ's Curing bodily Sicknesse was an Evidence and Effect, of his Bearing our Sins, and that Penalty which they demerit, and, therefore, he applies, or accommodates the Thing unto its Evidence and Effect, which is not unusual with the New *Testament* Writers. A plain Instance of this we have: *And gave Gifts unto Men: in the Prophet, it is, received Gifts for Men.* 3. *And in the same Sense, or one near akin to it, our Blessed Lord, and the Jewish High-Priests, Priests, and Levites, bare Sin, as they made Atonement for Sin, or suffered or in those Things which God was pleased to appoint, as proper, on their Part, either for the Removal, or to signify the Removal, or Taking away of Guilt.* In the Margin, says he: *This Idea the Writers of the New Testament give us of Atonement and Pardon; particularly, in Relation our to Lord.* John 1:29. *The Lamb of God, (ο αιρων) which taketh away the Sin of the World.* 1 John 3:5. *He was manifested that he (αρη) might take away our Sins.* Romans 11:27. *When (αφαιρειν) I shall take away their Sins.* Hebrews 10:4. *It is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should (περιελειν) take away Sins.* Put way Sin, and bear the Sins of many, signify the same Thing,

*Hebrews* 9:26, 28. Answ. 1. In *Levitical Services*, there was a *typical* Bearing of Sin. 2. As the Effect of that, a *typical* and *political* Pardon of Sin, or Removal of Guilt.

4. What Christ took away, he bare, and was made, if we may believe the *New Testament* Writers: *He bore our Sire in his own Body on the Tree: He hath made him to be Sin for us who knew, no Sin.* 4. That he took away our Guilt, is a *certain* and *precious* Truth; but not believed by Mr. *Taylor*, for, according to his Opinion, Christ obtained *nothing more, than an Offer* of Forgiveness, and it is left to us to do that, where upon follows the Removal of our Guilt. In his Opinion, Christ neither bare, nor bare away our Sin. 5. In *Romans* 11:27, God's Act of Pardon is expressed, and not what our Saviour

did and suffered, in order to the Removal of our Guilt. 6. It is false, which he affirms, that to *put away Sin, and bear the Sins of many, signify the same Thing*, in Hebrews 9:26, 28. For putting away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself, is the Effect, and his bearing Sin, in the offering of himself, is the Cause. Therefore, they differ as a Cause, and its Effect resulting from it, do differ, and are not the same Thing. 4. His fourth Observation not being to the Purpose, I shall take no Notice of it, *viz. Forbearing, for a Season, to inflict deserved Punishment.* 5. Says he, *The Word also denotes to bear a Burden; and so metaphorically to bear, or to be liable to bear, or endure Punishment and Suffering. Thus Criminals bore their own Iniquities.* Answ. 1. He allows that the Word denotes to bear a Burden, and, therefore, when it is used to express Christ's Bearing our Sin, it may intend his Bearing it upon himself, as a Load. But, 2. He will never be able to prove, that the Word (שׁבֵל) bear, hath any other Signification, which is used to express Christ Bearing our Sin, or Guilt. 3. When Descendants bore the *Whoredoms or Iniquities of their Parents*, which he mentions, we must observe, (1.) They were not innocent, but guilty, and guilty of the same Sins, as their Fathers were. (2.) Guilt was charged on them. And, (3.) They suffered Punishment. Therefore, (4.) The Terms used in Relation unto the Sufferings and Death of Christ, or his Bearing Sin, are properly expressive of a Charge of Guilt, of Bearing it, and of suffering Punishment, in Consequence of that Imputation of Sin or Guilt. No *unnatural and forced Sense* is put upon them, when we interpret them to such a Meaning. This is well worthy of Observation.

6. He seems conscious to himself, that his sixth Observation, which relates unto *Ezekiel's Bearing the Iniquities of the Children of Israel*, cannot convey any Light to us on this Subject: And, therefore, I may justly pass that over. Now he comes to his Conclusion.

7. Upon the Whole, says he, *It is abundantly evident, no Proof can be drawn from Scripture, that Bearing Sin includes the Notion of transferring Guilt from the Nocent to the Innocent.* Answ. 1. According to the Scripture all Men universally, are become guilty before God. There is no innocent Person among the Race of *Adam*, who naturally descend from him; how, therefore, can we expect to find any Account, in Scripture, of transferring Guilt from the Nocent to the Innocent: All this Labour of Mr. *Taylor's* is but *solemn Trifling* on this momentous Subject. Nor, 2. Is it to be proved from Scripture, that God ever did, or will decree, that the Innocent shall suffer, on Occasion of the Crimes of the Nocent; will Mr. *Taylor* for that Reason deny, that Christ suffered, on Occasion of our Sins? He cannot, if he really thinks, that the Death of Christ is a Condition, Reason, or Motive with God to forgive sin. 3. The Affair of Christ's

Death is a *singular* and *unparalleled* Case, and, therefore, it is *preposterous* and *absurd* to argue, that, that cannot be in this Case, which is not to be found in other Cases, which cannot be compared with it.

8. In another Place, he farther objects unto the Transferring of our Guilt to Christ, and recommends a *Pamphlet*, intitled, *Second Thoughts concerning the Sufferings and Death of Christ*. I shall consider briefly what that *Author* offers on the Subject, in an *Appendix* to these Sheets. Says Mr. Taylor, *Guilt is my doing Wrong, whereby I become obnoxious to Punishment. And, therefore, Guilt in its own Nature cannot be transferred. For Punishment is necessarily connected with the Wrong done, and the Wrong is done by none but myself. Therefore Punishment can be due to none, and, consequently can possibly be inflicted upon none but myself.* Answ. 1. Actions good or bad, *physically* considered, cannot be transferred. But, 2. Actions *relatively* considered, or in their Relation to the Law, may be transferred, or reckoned, or imputed to others, when there is a proper Foundation for it, as there is in the Affair of the Imputation of our Sins to Christ, *viz.* his Sponsion, or his becoming a Surety to God for us. 3. It is not supposed, that he did the Wrong, nor was Christ reputed to have done the Wrong; but the Wrong done by us was put to his Account. As the Apostle *Paul* desired, that the Wrong as well as Debt of *Onesimus*, might be imputed to him, or placed to his Account. And, 4. Hence Punishment, in Justice, was inflicted on Christ, upon the Ground of his Suretyship-Engagement to God for us. 5. The Reason, why nothing *parallel* to this may be acted among Men in criminal Cases, is, Rulers and Subjects are equally bound by *natural* Justice, and, therefore, Lawgivers have no Power to require, or accept of the Sponsion of an innocent Person for the Guilty, in criminal Cases; nor hath any innocent Man Power over himself, or a Right to put himself under the Obligation of any Criminal, if he would. 6. The Righteousness of God's Nature will not permit him to suffer Sin to go unpunished. His Will to punish Sin is necessary, though free; if it were not, he might have willed to permit the Creature to fin for ever, without suffering Punishment. But, 7. As God is above the Law, wherein it is constituted or appointed, that Punishment shall be inflicted on the Guilty, by Perpetration of Offence; he can dispense with it in that Particular, and admit of the Sponsion of another, who hath Power over himself, to put himself under our Obligation. We know, full as well as any *Socinian* whatever, that nothing like this may be transacted among Men; but, if we are not greatly mistaken, the Judicial Procedures of God, in the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and punishing it in him, and pardoning Sin to the Guilty, are not to be measured by, compared with, or accommodated unto the Judicial Proceedings of Men, in criminal

Cases. And herein consists much, both of the *Glory* and *Mystery* of our Redemption, by the Death of Christ. If there was not something *singular* and *unparalleled* in this Affair, there would be neither *Mystery* nor *Glory* in it. And this is what some Men are labouring to prove, out of *Hatred* to the Glory of God, as it shines through *Jesus Christ*, in the fulness of our Salvation, by his Death, as me meritorious Cause thereof.

**9.** Mr. Taylor elsewhere speaks thus: *It may be alledged, that the Lord laid on him the Iniquities of us all, Isaiah 53:6. But who knows not, that our Redemption is imaged by various figurative Expressions? As, healed by his Stripes; washed from our Sins in his Blood; he was made Sin for us: Which, if understood literally and strictly, would supply very strange Doctrine.* Answ. 1. The Stripes and Blood of Christ are the meritorious Cause. 2. Our Healing, Peace, and Pardon are the Effect. 3. He was made Sin, by a Charge of our Guilt to him. Which Things are not *strange*, but *glorious*, and will eternally be so esteemed by those who are the subjects of Redemption.

**10.** He adds, *Taking the Passage, as it stands in our Translation, we ought in Reason to interpret it agreeably to the preceding Phrases, which relate to the same Thing.* Isaiah 53:5, *He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed.* — *And the Lord hath laid on him, (it is in the Margin, hath made to meet on him) the Iniquities of us all; that is, the Sufferings by which we are all redeemed.* Answ. 1. Let an Instance be produced, where (נִשׁוּעָה) signifies *merely* Suffering, or Suffering without Relation to Guilt, and take what is contended for. 2. In Isaiah 53:5 the Prophet declares for what he suffered, *viz.* our Transgressions: And, in these Words, he expresses God's Act of charging our Sins to him, when he suffered, and in order to his Suffering. 3. He opposes the Imputation of our Sins to him unto that false Opinion the Jews had of Christ's being *stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*, for his own Guilt. And, therefore, it is not his Suffering, which is meant, but the *meritorious* Cause of his Sufferings, Guilt, not his own, but ours.

**11.** He subjoins, *But, considering the Metaphor of Sheep going astray, by which the Wanderings of Mankind are represented, and the Turn which St. Peter gives to this Passage, I am inclined to think, that the Spirit of God, in Isaiah, has Reference to the Meeting of stray Sheep, in order to bring them back again to the Shepherd,* 1 Peter 2:24, 25; Isaiah 53:6. — *And the Lord hath made to meet (occursare) by him the Iniquities of us all.* That is to say, by him the

*Lord hath caused to meet and stop the Iniquities of us all, wherein we have wandered from him, to turn us back to himself, who is the Shepherd of our Souls.*

Answ. 1. The Word signifies to meet, without including the Idea of Stopping. 2. Christ is the Subject, *in, upon, or against whom* our Iniquities, were made to meet, as the whole Scope of the Place fully proves. 3. The *Prophet* speaks not of our Persons, but of our Crimes. And, 4. He speaks of Crimes committed, or of Guilt already contracted. 5. Stopping us in a sinful Course, and making us to turn back to the Shepherd of our Souls, is not stopping our Sins which we have before committed. He observes, that the Word we translate, hath laid, *is, in Hiphil, which only adds the Idea of causing or making, the same that we render meet*, Exodus 23:4. *If thou meet thine Enemy's Ox or Ass going, astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again; to no other Purpose, which I can discern, than letting the Reader know, that he is acquainted with the different Sense of Verbs, in different Conjugations, in the Hebrew Language; and that is a Matter of no great Importance.* However, this Instance proves, that the Word (**וְיָמַד**) does not necessarily include in it the Idea of Stopping, for a Man might meet his Enemy's Ox or Ass, and not stop either. Whether Men act with *upright* and *sincere* Intentions, who thus shamefully pervert the Scripture, Mr. Taylor, and others, will do well, in a *most serious* Manner, to consider, lest they continue to *wrest it unto their own Destruction*. Thus far of Christ's Bearing Sin.

### **CHAPTER 3 - OF THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, AND OF THE EVIDENCES, THAT THEY WERE VICARIOUS.**

**I.** IF our Saviour really bore the Sins of the *many*, who obtain eternal Salvation, through the Merit of his Sacrifice, his Sufferings, certainly, were exceedingly great. For the Imputation of such a *Mass* of Guilt must be followed with Sorrows, Grief and Distress of Soul, inexpressible.

**1.** Let us consider several Expressions of his, in Relation to this Matter. And, our blessed Lord speaks thus: *Now, is my Soul* (*τεταρκται*) *troubled, and what shall I say?* The Word, which we render *troubled*, is very significant, and expressive of *Terror* (John 12:27; Esther 7:6), *Consternation* (Genesis 41:8), *Trembling* (Isaiah 64:2), and *Bowing down* (Psalm 42:6) through *Grief* and *Fear*, in each of these Senses, the Septuagint use it, as the Reader will see by examining the Places referred unto. And, therefore, the Anguish and

Distress, which our Saviour was now the Subject of, must be extremely great. Add to this: *My Soul is* (*περιλυπος*) *exceeding sorrowful even unto Death.* The Word signifies to be surrounded, or encompassed with Sorrow on every Side. And the Septuagint use it to express *a Dejection and Casting down of the Mind, through overwhelming Grief* (Matthew 26:38; Psalm 43:5;

*Matthew 26:37).* This our Lord said, to express the Sorrow and most grievous Anguish which then attended him: *He began to be sorrowful, and* (*αδημονειν*) *very heavy, or exceedingly full of Anguish, insomuch that he was ready to faint.*

**2.** The Prostration of our Lord shews both his Humility, and the depressing Weight of Sorrow, which his holy Soul laboured under. *He fell on his Face to the Earth* (Matthew 26:39), and lay in the Dust, through the Force of that pungent Grief, which took deep and firm Possession of his pure Mind. And he became thus prostrate three Times (Matthew 26:44).

**3.** His Agony is an Evidence unto what Height the afflictive Passions of Fear and Sorrow role in him: *And, being in an Agony, be prayed more earnestly* (Luke 22:44). The Word (*αγωνια*) Agony, signifies great Anxiety, or Perturbation of Mind.

**4.** The *Tears be shed, and the strong Cryings be poured forth*, prove the inconceivable Anguish, Grief, and Sorrow, his whole Soul was filled with (*Hebrews 5:5*) His Supplication unto the Father, is called *Roaring* (Psalm 22:1), because of the *vehement* and *intense* Manner, wherein he addressed him, through the Greatness of that *prevailing* Sorrow, which *overwhelmed* his Heart.

**5.** The extraordinary Effect, which the Distress of his Soul produced in his animal Frame, is a full Evidence of its unparalleled Greatness. Through the extreme Anguish of his Mind, he *sweat as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground* (Luke 22:44) Instances of the like are not at all needful to be produced, to prove the Credibility of the Fact; because, as there never was such a Subject of Suffering, in this World, so never did any one, upon Earth, suffer like him: *His Visage was so marred, more than any Man's, and his Form more than the Sons of Men* (Isaiah 52:14).

**II.** We shall be at no Loss, in accounting for the *extreme* Dolors of our Saviour, if we duly consider the *positive* Acts of God, which he, as a righteous Judge, taking Vengeance on Sin, put forth, upon the Soul of Christ immediately. Men wounded him in his Body; but his Father bruised and put him to Grief, in his Soul, when he made *that an Offering for Sin.* Wherein the Particulars following, are observable:

1. The Father *made him Sin for us*, and *caused our Iniquities to meet in, or fall upon him*. Not that the Father accounted him to have committed those Sins, or Iniquities, or produced a Consciousness in him of the Perpetration of those Crimes, which he bore, in order to atone for them; but he impressed his Mind with a *piercing* Sense of the Charge of our Guilt to him, and excited a most painful Sensation, in his Soul, of the *dreadful Malignity* and *Demerit* of Sin, wherewithal he stood charged, as the Surety of his People.
2. He made him a Curse: Christ *hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us* (Galatians 3:13). Our Saviour was as really made a Curse for us, as we are, in Fact, delivered from the Law's Curse, in Consequence of his Sufferings and Death. To say, as the *Socinians* do, as it were, he was made a Curse, or he seemed to be made a Curse, is an *impious* Contradiction of the express Assertion of the holy Spirit, and not an Interpretation of it. This was not the Act of Men, for they could not make our blessed Lord a Curse; nor the Act of *infernal* Spirits. It was the Act of God, which he put forth, immediately upon the Soul of our Redeemer, whereby he most deeply pierced and put him to Grief.
3. The Father *withdrew* from him, or *forsook* him. This Dereliction affected not his Union to, or with the Father, for no Breach was made on that: Nor the Interest he had in his Approbation and Delight: Neither that Sustentation under his Sorrows by the Father, which he had promised to him; but it was the Want of the Enjoyment of his *ravishing* and *delightful Presence*. As in his Crucifixion he enjoyed not the clearing Rays of the natural Sun: So in that *most awful* Season, he suffered the Loss of the *comforting Rays* of heavenly Light, by the thick Cloud of our Guilt, interposing, between his holy Soul and the Father of Glory. He was encompassed by Darkness without, and deprived of the Light of Divine Favour *within*. And, therefore, he uttered that sore Complaint: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me* (Psalm 22:1)? This was the *Punishment the Loss*, which he endured. Farther,
4. The Father impressed his Mind with a Sense of his vindictive Displeasure against Sin. As he had decreed, that Christ should suffer for us, and he had consented to become a Victim for our Guilt: He (*οὐκ εφεισάτω*) *did not spare him* (Romans 8:32), or deal tenderly with him; but commanded the Sword of Justice to awake against, and smite him: *Awake, O Sword against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, smite the Shepherd* (Zechariah 13:7). Sovereign Mercy towards us provided and presented the Victim before Divine Justice, with his free Consent; and God, as a Judge, calls upon Justice to execute Vengeance: Justice, *armed with all its*

*flaming Terrors*, rises, and falls upon the *willing Sacrifice*, and his Soul is *absorpt* of Grief and Anguish, in Consequence thereof.

**III.** The Sufferings of our blessed Lord from Men, previous unto, and in his Crucifixion, were *extremely* great. What Indignity and Reproach were cast upon him! Unto what Scorn, Derision, and Shame was he exposed! How cruelly and inhumanly was he used, in his Examination and Trial! Men do not treat the most *villainous* Malefactor, in such a Manner, as the *innocent* and *meek* Jesus was treated! He was the Subject of the most contemptuous Speeches: *Spit upon: Buffeted: Blindfolded, and struck in the Face*, taunted at, and called upon to prophesy, or declare who smote him: *He gave his Back to the Smiters, and his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair, and hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting: Scourged: Delivered by the Governor, convinced of his Innocency, and of the Malice of his Enemies, into the Hands of barbarous, rude, and merciless Soldiers to be mocked, derided, and crucified.* They stripped him of his Garments, arrayed him in Robes of *mock Majesty: Platted a Crown of Thorns*, and put it on his Head, and smote him with a Reed, whereby his sacred Flesh was torn, and Veins pierced: And, in Derision, *bowed the Knee before him, crying, Hail King of the Jews.* They led him forth to the Place of Execution, he bearing his Cross, until, as they might reasonably suppose, he was ready to faint, through the cruel Usage he had received: His Limbs were *violently stretched*, which must put him unto great Torture, and his Hands and Feet were nailed to *the accursed Tree*; and, by how much more tender and curious the Texture of his Body was, by so much the more, he was sensible of Pain, and, therefore, the Piercing of his Hands and Feet must be attended with exquisite Sensations of Pain. In these dreadful Circumstances, he was *forsaken by his Friends*, and unpitied by the *relentless* Number of *inhuman* Spectators, who surrounded his Cross. Every *tender* Passion was banished from the Breasts of the Beholders of him, in his Sufferings; nothing but a *savage* Disposition possessed them. Hence, instead of Pity, he met with *Reviling, Insult, and Blasphemy*. They wagged their Heads, and cried out, *He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let him come down from the Cross, and we will believe on him; he trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him.*

And when the Extremity of his Pains, thro' the *Dislocation* of his Bones, and the Piercing of his Hands and Feet, had brought on him a *scorching Fever*, which was attended with extraordinary Thirst; there bloody Miscreants presented to him *Gall and Vinegar* to drink, a most *bitter* and *biting* Potion. Thus the innocent *Jesus* was delivered up into the Hands of Sinners, according to the determinate *Counsel*

*and Foreknowledge of God*, to be crucified and slain. When we consider there Things, surely, we can't but say: Oh, what Wickedness is in the Mind of Man! Oh, what *intense* Love to poor Sinners filled the Soul of our blessed Lord, that made him willing to undergo such Sufferings, in order to save them from deferred Destruction! Oh, what an *evil* Thing is Sin, that was the procuring Cause of all the Ignominy, Reproach, Dolors, and Agonies, which our Saviour was exposed unto, and expired under, on the Cross! Oh, how *hard* are our *cursed* Hearts, that they are not *broken, dissolved*, and *melted* within us, by the Consideration of his *agonizing* Pains, unparalleled Reproaches, and taunting Insults from his Enemies, when he suffered for us, to redeem our Souls from Hell and Destruction! And, surely, we must be convinced, if we duly consider what our Lord suffered from the Hand of the Father, what he underwent from Men, by his *Appointment* and *Decree*, with a View to our Redemption from Sin, and its *penal* Effects, that the Transaction of his Death was necessary in order to our Salvation. Can we possibly persuade ourselves to think, that this Affair was willed and decreed of God, without any Necessity, or with no View to the Vindication of his Authority, and Satisfaction of his Justice, in saving us from Misery? Or, that there is no Fitness in the Death of Christ to atone for our Guilt, and procure the Remission of our Sins, for which he suffered, both in his Soul and Body, in this *amazing*, Manner? Surely, no such Imagination can find Admittance in our Minds, if we will allow ourselves seriously to consider of those Things.

#### IV. Christ suffered in our Stead: Or, his Sufferings were vicarious and in our Room.

1. This is evident from what is observed above. For, if he was *made Sin*, if he was *made a Curse*, and if he suffered from *the Hand of God immediately*, or if God himself, by *positive* Acts, put forth upon him, did *bruise* and *put him to Grief*, or *make his Soul an Offering for Sin*, his Sufferings were *penal*, and, consequently, *vicarious*. Because no innocent Person can be the Subject of *Penalty*, for Sins of his own, by Reason he hath committed none; therefore, his penal Sufferings must be the Effect of the Guilt of others, and he must endure those Sufferings, in their *Place and Stead*. It hath not yet been proved, nor ever will be, that the Sufferings of Christ were not penal, since in Suffering he was *made a Curse*.

2. He suffered for our Crimes: Says the *Prophet*: *But he was wounded for Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities*. And the Apostle asserts, that he *died for our Sins*, that he was *delivered for our Offences*: The unbelieving Jews thought he was *stricken, smitten of God and afflicted*, for Guilt of his own: But he was wounded for

our Transgressions, *etc.* This is spoken in Opposition to the false Opinion of the *incredulous* Jews, who imagined, that he had contracted Guilt, which rendered him worthy of Death, and very clearly suggests, that it was not without a *meritorious* Cause he so suffered, but that, that Cause were not Sins of his own, but those of others.

**3.** Our blessed Saviour died for us: *God commended his Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.* That is to say, not for our Good only, but in our Room, and so for our Profit, as is clear from the Use of the Preposition, and the Scope of the Place. The Preposition is used to express in the *Place or Stead* of another. *That* ( $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\sigma\sigma\omega$ ) *in thy Stead*, and ( $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omega$ ) *in Christ's Stead*. The Scope of the Place evidently evinces, that this is the Sense intended. For, the Apostle supposes, that for *a good Man some might dare to die* (*Romans 5:7*). Not hazard Life, to preserve a good Man in imminent Danger, as Mr. *Taylor* paraphrases the Text; but actually to resign Life for him, or to die in his Stead. A Man may hazard his Life, and yet preserve it. The Apostle designs an actual Resignation of Life, and not Exposing Life to Danger, which may be, and often is done, without Dying. And Christ is said to *give his Life* ( $\alpha\nu\tau\iota\pi\omega\lambda\lambda\omega\omega$ ) *for many, i.e.* in their Stead.

**4.** The Life of Christ was given as a *Ransom*, ( $\lambda\upsilon\tau\rho\omega$ ) *a Price* of Redemption for *many* (*Matthew 20:28*), which necessarily supposes, that he died in their Stead. For they were obnoxious unto Death, on Account of Guilt, and he gave his Life to redeem them from that Obnoxiousness to Death, and, therefore, his Death was *vicarious*, or, he died in their Stead.

**5.** All those Effects are ascribed unto the Death of Christ, which it may be thought to procure for us, as taken in that Point of Light. (1.) Expiation of Sin. (2.) Peace and Reconciliation. (3.) Redemption from the Curse of the Law. (4.) Security from suffering Divine Wrath and Vengeance. There are such Effects as might be expected to arise from his Death, if he died in our *Room*; and, therefore, there is clear and cogent Reason to conclude, that he not only died for our *Good*, but in our *Stead*, considered as Criminals, and for that Reason obnoxious to Death.

**6.** Our Forgiveness, on the Foundation of Christ's Death, is an Act of Righteousness. God *set forth his Son to be a Propitiation, — to declare his Righteousness*: Not his *saving Grace and Mercy*, as Mr. *Taylor* speaks, but his Holiness and Justice. If God is just in forgiving Sin, his Justice must be satisfied for the Sin pardoned, which it could not be by the Death of Christ, if he died not in our Stead.

7. This Method of Pardon and Salvation became God: *It became him, for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings (Hebrews 2:10).* The Condecency of this Procedure respects the Righteousness of God's Nature, and, therefore, Christ's Sufferings must be referred unto Justice, and, consequently, in Suffering, he was our Substitute.

## CHAPTER 4 - OF ATONEMENT, OR RECONCILIATION FOR SIN

MR. *Taylor* apprehends, that the Sense of Atonement hath not yet been understood. Let us; therefore, see what additional Light he strikes upon this Subject. If he discovers any Thing of Importance relating to this Matter, which we did not discern before, I promise to give him those Praises, which such a Discovery demands.

I. *Spiritual Atonement for Sin*, as it hath been understood, includes there Things in it: The Expiation of Guilt. Reconciliation, or Peace with God. And the Sinner's Impunity, or Deliverance from an Obnoxiousness to Suffering Punishment, for his Guilt. Our *Author's* Design, is, if possible to explain away this Notion of Atonement, or Reconciliation for Sin by the Death of Christ. The Reader ought carefully to observe, that the Atonement made by Sacrifices was not followed with *real, spiritual Remission of Sin*, as the proper Effect of those Sacrifices, by whomsoever they were offered. Sacrifices were not required unto that End, nor was it possible, that such an End could be brought about by them, which is clearly asserted, and abundantly proved in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*.

II. Mr. *Taylor* opposes the Opinion of the Substitution of the Sacrifice, in Stead of the Offender, and offers various Reasons against it, which I shall take into Consideration.

1. *The Sins for which Sacrifices were generally offered were Sins of Ignorance, and ceremonial Uncleanness, which were not capital by Law. The Victim therefore could not die in the Offender's Stead, when his Offence was not punishable with Death. Answ. 1.* According to the moral Law, all and every Sin was punishable with Death: "*The Soul that sins shall die. Death, therefore, is the Wages* of every Transgression of that Law. 2. As all Men are degenerate and guilty, the moral Law cannot be the Rule of Judgment, as to Life and Death, in human Societies, because there is no Man but hath forfeited his Life, according to that Law. For it allows no Sinner to live. 3. The *political Law*, given to the *Jews*, made some Breaches of the moral Law capital; as Murder, Blasphemy, and Adultery: And

other Breaches thereof it did not make capital: As Theft, Uncleanness, in one Instance, and Perjury. And, therefore, some *atrocious* Crimes did not subject a Man guilty of them to Death, in a *political* Sense. 4. Sacrifices were not instituted for any Breach of the moral Law, which the *political* Law made capital. Hence, *David*, in Relation unto a capital Offence, whereof he had been guilty, says: *Thou desirest not Sacrifice, i.e. for this Sin of mine, else would I give it (Psalm 51:16)*. But it follows not, that those Sins for which they were instituted, were not capital by the moral Law, or that those Breaches of the moral Law, did not render a Person worthy of, and subject him to Death, according to that Law. Therefore, 5. The Author's Reason, why the Victim could not die in the Offender's Stead, entirely vanishes, *viz.* that it was offered for Crimes not punishable with Death. 6. The *political* Law required the Shedding of Blood for Transgressions of the moral Law, which were not capital, in a *political* Sense; and, if the Sinner wilfully neglected to offer Sacrifice for his Offence, he was to die without Remedy. And, therefore, 7. The *political* Law, or God, as the Governor of that People, accepted of the Death of the Victim, as an Atonement for the Sin of the Offerer of it, and allowed him to live, though by his Crime he had forfeited his Life; and the Death of the Beast offered in Sacrifice was *vicarious*. 8. This was a lively *Type* of the Substitution of Christ in our Room, and of his Sufferings and Death in our Stead, to make *real spiritual* Atonement for our Sins, in order to deliver us from that Curse, whereunto they subjected us. The *Socinians*, as they are Enemies to the Whole of *real Christianity*: So (*dicam quod fentio*) they are the *greatest Triflers*, where they seem to reason most, in objecting against it.

**2.** *If the Virtue or Efficacy of every particular Sacrifice consisted in Suffering n vicarious Punishment, then, whereas that Punishment was the same in all such Sacrifices, by whomsoever offered, it must have had its Effects in all those Sacrifices; and they must all have been equally acceptable to God, as such. Which is well known to be false.* Answ. 1. Who says, that *proper* Punishment was inflicted on those Sacrifices? 2. Those Sacrifices were offered, that the Offender might not die. 3. The Offering of those Sacrifices, as Mr. *Taylor* allows, did discharge the Sinner from *political Penalties*: Let him prove, if he is able, that, *that* Penalty was not *Death*. Yet, 4. It is not pretended, that these Sacrificial Services were equally acceptable to God, whether performed in Faith, or not.

**3.** *Indeed, the Victim might, and, I suppose, did, represent the Person who offered it; whatever was done to that, was to be applied to himself.* Then, observe, 1. As the Beast was slain, surely, it signified to him, that he deferred to be slain, or to die for his Sin. 2.

It was Sin committed, or Guilt already contracted, on Account whereof he offered Sacrifice. *To shew him, adds he, the Demerit of Sin in general; how he ought to slay the Brute in himself, and devote his Life and Soul to God, etc.* — But this is very remote from the Victim's Suffering, in his Stead, the Death which he deserved to die for his Sins, or Suffering a vicarious Punishment. How does this appear? He gives no Evidence of it. Hereby the Offender was discharged from political Penalties, he grants; and that those Penalties were not Death, he will never prove. — 1. The Death of the Beast was not, *properly* speaking, Punishment. But, 2. That typically represented the vicarious Punishment, which the Lamb of God was to bear, in order to make *real, spiritual* Atonement for Sin. With him, *vicarious Punishment is a Contradiction in Terms. For as there cannot be a vicarious Guilt, or as no one can be guilty in the Stead of another; so there cannot be a vicarious Punishment, or no one can be punished instead of another.* Answ. 1. No one can contract Guilt instead of another. But, 2. One may bear Guilt which is contracted, instead of another. And, 3. Suffer Punishment in the Place of another. Because, says he, *Punishment, in its very Nature, connotes Guilt in the subject which bears it.* Answ. 1. Guilt is not an *inherent Quality*, but a Charge of Sin, and an Obnoxiousness to Condemnation on that Account. 2. An innocent Person may come under such a Charge, for it is not a Transfusion of a sinful Action, or of the corrupt Habits of the guilty Person but only an Imputation of his Sin, or Guilt. Thus, 3. He may bear it, though he becomes not the Subject of Sin, as an *inherent Quality*.

4. He asks a very surprising Question, *But is not vicarious Punishment, or the Victim's suffering Death in the Offender's Stead, as an Equivalent to Divine Justice, included in the Notion of Atonement?* Answ. No. 1. Why is this Query put? Did ever any Person think so? Is it possible that a Man in his Sense can imagine, that the Death of a Brute, is an *Equivalent* for Sin committed against God? But, 2. This is no Objection unto an *Equivalent* being required and given, in order to *real, spiritual* Remission. He seems to proceed as *gravely* to prove the Negative, as if the Affirmative was believed and professed, whereas, I suppose, it was never dreamt of, by any Man professing Christianity, in the World. But some Men must be allowed *solemnly to trifle*, when, and where, they find themselves unable to *reason*. He goes on to say,

(1). *Atonement was made with the Scape-Goat, though he was not slain.* Answ. 1. That belonged unto the Sacrifice, *Leviticus 16:5.* 2. The slain Goat typified the Sufferings of the Lamb of God. 3. The Scape-Goat *represented*, in the same Manner, the Removal of Guilt, as the Effect, of his Sufferings and Death.

**(2).** Says he, *If the Offender was not able to bring a Lamb, etc. — he was allowed to bring the tenth Part of an Ephah of fine Flour for a Sin- Offering, etc. — Which could never suggest the Idea of vicarious Punishment.* Answ. 1. This Exception did not weaken, but strengthen the general Law.

Inasmuch as *Bread is the Staff of Life*, the Burning of the Flour may well be thought to represent to the Offender, that he deserved to die. And, That, in order to *real spiritual Remission*, a Life must be parted with. Farther, 4. Though this Change was allowed because of the Poverty of the Offender, it follows not that his Thoughts were to be taken off from the Sacrificing of an Animal for his Sin, which, but for his Poverty, he stood obliged unto.

**5.** Nor did the Shedding Blood, in itself, imply Atonement by vicarious Punishment. For it is never said, that Atonement was made for Sin by, Peace-Offerings, etc. Answ. 1. In legal Sacrifices, *proper Punishment* was not inflicted. But, 2. Shedding of Blood was *fitly typical* of taking away Life, in a Way of Punishment for Sin. 3. Though in some Instances Blood might be shed, when Atonement was not made for Sin, it is not to be concluded from thence, that Shedding Blood, in *typical Atonement*, was not a Type of that *vicarious Punishment*, which Christ the *Anti-type* was to bear.

**6. —** *It is the Blood that maketh Atonement for the Soul. But how? By Way of vicarious Punishment? Not a Word of that.* Answ. 1. That Atonement was *typical* only. 2. *Proper Punishment* was not borne. Yet, 3. It fitly represented Christ's Shedding his Blood, in order to *make spiritual Atonement*.

**III.** Mr. Taylor proceeds unto an *elaborate*, but very *trifling* Enquiry, into the Sense of Atonement. After a Collection of all the Places in the *Old Testament*, where the Term expressing Atonement is used, as a *Verb* and *Noun*, seemed good to him to employ himself in examining into the Sense of the original Word, (כִּפְרָנָה) where it is used without any Relation, unto the Offering of Sacrifices, for Sin. Not to find out Truth, but to amuse and mislead his Reader, and prevent his discerning what Atonement for Sin, by the Death of Christ, includes in it. In this Labour he spends almost twenty Pages, wherein it is entirely needless to follow him. If he had been disposed, as he ought, to have learned what Atonement signifies, or contains in it, he might without any Difficulty. For, 1. The Word, actively used, signifies to *appease*, *pacify*, *reconcile*, or *make Reconciliation* (*Genesis 32:20; Proverbs 16:14*). 2. When used passively, it imports, that a Person is appealed, pacified, or reconciled (*Ezekiel 16:63*). 3. As a Noun, it is taken for a Price, or Ransom (*Job 33:24*). Hence, 4. When Atonement is made by a Price,

or Ransom, nothing is to be feared from the Party who was before displeased. And there Things have Place in the Atonement made by Christ for our Sins. (1). Guilt is covered or removed, and taken away out of the Sight of God, as a Judge. (2). The Death of Christ is our (**כֻּפֶּר**) Atonement, or Ransom, and Price of Redemption, and nothing else. (3) *God is pacified towards us, for all that we have gone* (*Ezekiel 16:63*), in Consequence of his Sufferings and Death. And, therefore, (4). We have no Reason, on this Foundation, to be afraid of his Terrors: For, *being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him.*

**IV.** Mr. *Taylor* makes some Reflections upon his *long* and *impertinent* Examination of the Texts, wherein Atonement is mentioned.

1. Forgiveness of Sin is Exemption from Punishment. — A Pardon only in Thought or Word, and which effecteth nothing, as in Effect no Pardon at all. Very well said, this is true, and, therefore, the Death of Christ procured our Exemption from Punishment, or Right to Impunity, and not an Offer of Pardon, for an Offer of Remission is not Pardon. Truth will sometimes out, when Men are very far from an Intention to express it.

2. *The Means of making Atonement for Sin are not uniform, etc.* Answ. 1. The Blood of Christ is the only Mean, of *spiritual* Atonement for Sin. 2. Pardon of Sin, in a *spiritual* Sense, is solely the Effect of his Blood- shedding and Sacrifice. 3. We see the Reason why he asserted above, that *Pardon only in Thought or Word, etc. is no Pardon at all*; it was to prove, that *real, spiritual* Atonement for Sin might be, and was made, by other Means than Christ's Blood; because we read of Atonement, without Relation to that as the Mean of it. But, 4. That Atonement was *typical* and *allusive* only: That, by the Death of Christ is *real, Spiritual, and eternal*.

3. *The giving an Equivalent to God, is no Ways included in the Nation of Atonement.* Answ. 1. Giving an Equivalent is not included in *typical* and *allusive* Atonement. I know of none who think it was. 2. If any other Sacrifice than that of Christ had been an *Equivalent*, his Sacrifice was unnecessary. 3. Though there was not an *Equivalent* in *typical* Atonement, it follows not, that an *Equivalent* was not given to the Law and Justice of God, in *real, spiritual* Atonement for Sin.

4. *The Transferring of Guilt doth not belong to the Sense of Atonement.* Answ. As before, 1. Not in Atonement *typical* and *allusive*. But, 2. In *real, spiritual* Atonement it is found, as we have

seen. 3. With equal Truth, he might say, that Exemption from suffering eternal Punishment is not included in the Pardon of Sin, by the Death of our Blessed Saviour. In this Branch of his Work, our Author makes a great Shew of Labour and Diligence; but he could not have acted a more *needless* and *impertinent* Part, than he hath done herein; and is as remote from answering the End he had in View, as possibly he could be. For nothing he offers, in the least Degree, affects the Doctrine of *real, Spiritual Atonement* for Sin, by the Death of Christ, as an *Equivalent* given to the Law and Justice of God, for our Transgressions.

## CHAPTER 5 - OF THE EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S DEATH

**I.** CHRIST submitted unto Death, or gave his Life for us: *This is my Blood which is shed for many. I am the good Shepherd: The good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep. He loved the Church, and gave himself for it.* 2. Our Blessed Saviour died for us, considered as Criminals. *God commended his Love towards us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us; he that was just, suffered for the unjust.* 3. In Dying he was made a Curse for us. *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* And, therefore, 4. His Death was *penal*, and in our *Stead*. Mr. Taylor is guilty of two Errors here: 1. He suggests, that Christ only died on our *Account*, and not in our *Place* and *Stead*. 2. He insinuates, that the former of these Scriptures, and others parallel to them, express the Benefit of Atonement, which they do not; but that glorious Mean whereby Atonement was made. Herein he hath acted a Part beneath his Character, as a Scholar; for it is below a Man of Learning to introduce the End of an Action, when the Action is spoken of only.

**II.** Our Lord suffered for our Sins: Or our Sins were the *meritorious Cause of his Death. He was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for Iniquities. He died for our Sins according go the Scriptures. He was delivered for our Offences. For the Transgression of my People was he stricken.*

1. None can deny that these Modes of Speaking, are capable of this Construction, without the least Force, that our Sins were the procuring Cause of his Death. For, that Thought cannot be expressed more properly by any Phrases, than it is by there. 2. Several Reasons may be offered to confirm this Sense. (1). God made our Sins to meet in him. (2). He took our sin upon him. (3). Bare it as a Burden in his own Body on the Tree. (4). In Dying, he became a Sacrifice for Sin. (5). He was awfully bruised and put to Grief, by *positive* Acts of God put forth upon him. (6). In no other View can our

Pardon be an Act of Righteousness, through his Death. (7). If Sin was not the procuring Cause of his Death, in Dying he could not be made a Curse, which, as has been before observed, he certainly was. (8). Unless this is allowed, we shall never be able to account for the *extreme* Anguish our Saviour was in, consistent with his Honour.

**III.** The final Cause of his Death, with Respect to Sin, was the Pardon of it, and that End he obtained by it. *This is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins. In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, viz. the Forgiveness of Sins, Having obtained eternal Redemption for us.* There was a Fitness in his Death to procure the Remission of our Guilt. Because, 1. His Sufferings were *penal*; he was made a Curse. 2. His Death had Merit in it equal to the Dignity of his Person, which is infinite. For his Blood is *the Blood of God*. Pardon includes in it a Non-imputation of Sin, Freedom from Condemnation, and Exemption from suffering Punishment. The Death of Christ gives us a Right to neither of these, in the Opinion of Mr. *Taylor*; Men have no Title to any saving Benefit, in Virtue of the Sufferings of Christ, as he thinks. They have an Offer of them, and no more, in Consequence of his Death. Right to Pardon they must: obtain for themselves, or perish in their Sins. An Offer of Pardon is not Pardon, nor gives Right to Remission; that must be acquired by the Sinner himself, or else his Sins will never be forgiven. In this Place, Mr. *Taylor* endeavours to confound the Ideas of Christ's Bearing Sin, and Bearing it away. *He shall bear their Iniquities. He bare the Sin of many. Who his own Self bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree.* There Scriptures express the Imputation of our Guilt to him, and his Suffering that Penalty which it demerited. And, his Sufferings being *satisfactory*, he bore our Guilt away. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World. Now, once in the End of the World, hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself.* These Texts express the proper Effect of the Death of Christ, as it was *satisfactory* for our Sins, *viz.* The Bearing away, or Removal of our Guilt. But Mr. *Taylor* denies, that Christ bore our Sin, or that he bore it away. Obtaining an Offer of Pardon for a Criminal, is not the Removal of his Guilt, he very well knows. Nor is our Lord's Death a *Ransom* for us, or a *Propitiation for our Sins*, according to his Opinion. For his Death neither redeemed our Persons from Misery, nor atoned for our Crimes, as he thinks. Neither, does his Death deliver us from Wrath, or the future Punishment of Sin. For that not the *least Right* unto an Exemption, from suffering Penalty, arises from the Death of Christ to any Sinner in the whole World, is that *blessed* Doctrine, which he would force upon our Belief.

**IV.** Mr. Taylor represents the *Death of Christ*, as the *Cause of our Resurrection*. 1. Some will be railed from the State of Death, not to enjoy Happiness, but to endure eternal Misery, which is not a Benefit. 2. Our Resurrection, *merely*, is not an Effect of the Death of Christ. But, 3. Our Resurrection unto Life and a happy Immortality is the proper Fruit thereof. 4. What he advances, in his *Note on Romans 5:20*, is false, relating to our *Law, which makes Felony Death, viz. that if a Malefactor, who is executed, should come to Life again, he must suffer again*, that is to say, if he was *really* dead. For, in that Case, the Law would have no Power over him; because he hath already suffered what the Law threatened for his Offence. 4. He hath not proved, nor ever will prove, that, by Death in the Divine Law, is intended Retaining the Body of the Transgressor in the Grave for ever. 5. It is false, that *the Saints under the Mosaic Dispensation died under the Curse of the Law*; which he asserts they did. 6. Christ was not made a Curse by *Hanging on the Tree*, but in Suffering and Dying; and his Hanging on the Tree is produced as an Evidence of it. 7. Nor will this serve to explain *Daniel 9:24*. For (**tres**) the Transgression, does not mean Adam's first Sin, which is called by the Apostle (**παραπτωμα**) *Offence*; but (**tres**) *the Transgression*, or the whole Guilt of all those for whom he suffered, *Isaiah 53:8*. 8. It is most false, that all *nominal* Christians are not *under the Law, but under Grace*. 9. He hath not proved, nor can prove, that *Righteousness*, in *Romans 3:25*, intends *pardoning Mercy*. It is the Justice or Holiness of God that is intended. 10. Reconciliation, is Freedom from an Obnoxiousness to Punishment, in the Divine Account, or Peace with God through the Blood of Christ.

**V.** *Another Effect*, says he, *ascribed to Christ's Sufferings and Death, is our Sanctification, spiritual Healing, or Deliverance from the Power of sin*. 1. Healing does not mean our Sanctification, in *Isaiah 53:5*, but Freedom from Curse and Wrath. 2. Our Sanctification is a *certain* Effect of the Death of Christ; but this he allows not. 3. Vain, in 1 Peter 1:18, intends a sinful Conversation, whether *Heathenish* or not. *In both these Senses, as he delivers us from the Guilt and Tower of Sin, he may be said to purge, wash, and cleanse us from Sin*. 1. Mr. Taylor believes not, that Christ delivers us from the Guilt of Sin. Nor, 2. From its Power. 3. What he ascribes to our Saviour's Death, he might as well attribute to his Life. For his Birth and Life are as much a Cause of the Removal of our Guilt, and of our Sanctification, as his Death is, according to the Principles of Mr. Taylor.

**VI.** *The Honours and Happiness*, says he, *of the future State are another Effect of Christ's Atonement*. Answ. 1. It is true, that our eternal Life is a *real* and *certain* Effect of the Death of Christ. But, 2. He believes it not. For, 3. He thinks, that Christ's Death procured only an Offer, or *conditional* Grant of Life: Not a Right unto it; that we are left to obtain for ourselves by our own Works, and, if we do not, we must die eternally.

**VII.** and Lastly, says he, *all the Blessings of the new Covenant are in, or by his Blood*. — *The Apostle argues at large, that, according to the Divine Constitution, the Death of Christ was necessary to make valid, or to ratify the Covenant of Grace, Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 10:29; Hebrews 9:15-19*. Answ. 1. The new Covenant is confirmed by the Blood of Christ. 2. All its Blessings are *sure* unto all the Foederates. 3. They are not all, but some Men only. He adds, *so far, and in all these preceding Senses, Christ may be said to have purchased or bought us with his Blood*. 1. Christ's Death was a Price of Redemption which he gave unto God, as Lawgiver and Judge, for us. 2. Our Persons are his Purchase, *Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20*. 3. It is false, that Righteousness means *Salvation*, which he says it does, in *1 Corinthians 1:30*. 4. He does not believe, that Christ is made *Salvation* unto us. For, notwithstanding all he hath done and suffered for us, he did not procure *Salvation*, but only an Offer or *conditional* Grant, which invests us with no Right at all unto it; we are left to save ourselves by our own Works, and, if we do not, we must eternally perish.

**VIII.** He tells us, That *these Things are abundantly sufficient to satisfy him of the following Particulars*: 1. That *Christ's Blood was shed, etc. for us, on our Account, to free us from some Evil, and to procure us some Benefit*. Answ. 1. Christ died in our *Place* and *Stead*, as hath been before proved. 2. Let me enquire, what Evil the Death of our Lord frees us from. Does it free us from a Charge of Sin? No. Is our Freedom from Condemnation an Effect of his Death? No. Are we delivered from Divine Wrath and Vengeance, by his *Blood-shedding* and *Sacrifice*? No. 3. What Benefit did his Death procure for us? Did he, by Dying for us, obtain Grace to sanctify our Hearts? No such Thing. Did he procure for us Grace to preserve us in the Midst of our numerous Snares and Dangers, in this World, until we arrive unto the heavenly State? No. Did he merit for us eternal Life and Blessedness? No. What was it, then, that he did obtain by offering himself a Sacrifice for us? Nothing at all, but an Offer of Pardon and Life. He hath left us to procure for ourselves a Right to both, and, if we do not, we shall never have a Claim to either.

**2.** *That it was an Offering and Sacrifice presented unto God, and really had its Effects with God, as highly pleasing and grateful to him.* Answ. 1. Christ offered himself a Sacrifice for Sin, and, therefore, he bore Sin and suffered Punishment. 2. I would enquire what those Effects are, which the Death of Christ had with God. Does it cause God not to impute Sin to us? No. He holds us guilty still. Does it cause him to deliver us from Malediction? No. Does it cause him to deliver us from eternal Vengeance? No. Something else must do that, or *his fiery Indignation will devour us*. These Effects sink into a *bare Offer* of Pardon, upon the Terms of Repentance and future Obedience.

**3.** *And it was offered unto God for our Sins, in order to their being forgiven by him. — If the Redemption we have, through his Blood, be the Forgiveness of Sins; then it is certain, that the Shedding of his Blood had its Effect with God, as it supplied such a Reason for the Forgiveness of Sins, as the Wisdom and Goodness of God, our Saviour, thought most proper and expedient, and without which he did not think it proper or expedient to forgive them.* Answ. 1. He allows not, that Forgiveness of Sin is obtained by the Blood of Christ, though he thus speaks. If Pardon is the *proper* Effect of Christ's Death, then Right to Remission must result therefrom; but this he will deny. 2. Permit me to ask, Why the Death of Christ is a Reason with God for the Forgiving of Sin? Is it because his Mercy to Sinners is greater, and more illustrious in pardoning them, upon that Condition, previously required of Christ? Not at all. Was his Indignation against Sin, or his *vindictive* Displeasure with it, manifested in the Affair of Christ's Death? No. For the Holiness and Justice of God had no more Concern in the Business of Christ's Sufferings, than if Sin had never been committed, or were never to be pardoned. God might have pardoned Sin, and saved Sinners, with full as much Honour to himself, without the Death of Christ, as he can with it. But, perhaps, this Mean of Pardon might be *proper* and *expedient*, in Relation unto Men, I proceed, therefore, with my Enquiry, and ask, Would it not have been *fit* and *proper* to pardon Sin, on the Terms of Repentance and future Obedience, if Christ had not died? Or does the Death of Christ constitute that Fitness? No, by no Means. Does the Death of Christ effect these Terms on which it is proper and expedient to forgive Sin? No more than his Birth or Life, or his making Clay to cure a Man of Blindness with it. Does his Death render these Terms more easy to Men? No more than his Exaltation to Dignity in Heaven. Men might with the same Ease have repented of their Sins, and yielded Obedience unto God, if Christ had not died; for his Death procured no Grace *from* God to bring them to Repentance, and to influence them unto Obedience, as Mr. Taylor thinks. It is somewhat strange, that Men can possibly be

*grave*, in speaking of the Death of Christ, as a *proper and fit* Expedient of the Remission of Sin, whose Principles lead them to assert these Things, and that they can expect to be believed, in their Assertions, by any Christian in the World.

**4.** *He offered one Sacrifice for Sins; — nobody can doubt, but the Jewish Sacrifices, in those Cases wherein they were admitted, did obtain the Pardon of Sin in some Degree or other. It must therefore be true, that the Sacrifice of our Lord did obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins, as the Wisdom of God judged it the fittest Method of granting the Remission of them, and that it is with Respect to his Sacrifice that our Sins are forgiven, whenever they are forgiven.* 1. It was not Pardon in a *Spiritual* Sense, which the *Levitical* Sacrifices obtained; it was not possible that they should procure Remission of Sin in that Sense. 2. They did obtain Pardon in a *political and typical* Sense, which was an Exemption from suffering Penalty, and not an Offer of Remission. 3. The anniversary Sacrifice was *typical* of Atonement made for all Sin, that is pardoned unto Men. 4. The Blood and Sacrifice of Christ procured not a *bare conditional* Grant, or Offer of Forgiveness; but a Right to *spiritual* Remission, or unto an Exemption from deferred Punishment. And, 5. The Virtue and Efficacy of his Death extends unto all the Sins of all the Persons for whom he suffered. *The Blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all Sin.* 6. When Mr. Taylor says *it is with Respect to his Sacrifice, that our Sins are forgiven, whenever they are forgiven:* He means not, that Christ's Death merited our Pardon: Or that any Right to Remission was procured by his Sacrifice: Or that God is in any Sense or Degree more honoured in this Way of Remission, than he would have been without the Offering of that Sacrifice: Or that Christ would have sustained the *least Injury*, if no Sinner, for whom he died, had ever been pardoned and saved. For, the utmost he was to expect, as a Reward for his *dolorous* Sufferings, and *bloody* Death, in Relation to the Pardon of Sin, was a Declaration from God, that he would forgive Men their Sins, in Case they took Care to acquire for themselves a Right to Impunity, by doing what he intended to enjoin upon them, with that View, or unto that End.

**5.** *If God of his own mere Grace had pardoned Sin, says he, without any Respect to the Offering of Christ, there would have been no Occasion at all, that Christ should have offered himself a Sacrifice for the Remission of them.* 1. If the Death of Christ was not needful, as a Punishment for Sin, it could not be needful as *mere* Suffering, in order to the Remission of it. If the Righteousness and Justice of God did not require the Death of Christ, as a *Penalty* due to Sin, which was to be forgiven in Consequence of his Death, it did not require his Death, considered *merely* as Suffering, to that End. If his Death

was needful to our Pardon, it must be, because there is some *Fitness* in it, why Remission should be extended unto us on that Foundation. Now, there is no *Fitness* in the *mere* Sufferings of an innocent Person, however great those Sufferings are, why Criminals should go unpunished. The Decree of the Death of Christ, therefore, must be *merely arbitrary*, and it is what God might have willed, without the leapt Intention of pardoning Sin, if it had so pleased him. 2. If there was no *Fitness* in the Death of our Blessed Saviour to procure Remission of Sin, there could be no *Fitness* therein to obtain a Declaration or Promise from God, that he would forgive it. This *Socinian*, nor any other, will ever be able to shew, that there was the least Degree of *Fitness* in the Death of Christ: to obtain for us either an Offer of Forgiveness, or a Right unto Impunity, upon their Principles. No *Fitness* can possibly be in it to attain either of these Ends, but considered, and as it *really was, penal*. 3. It is *fit* and *proper* to forgive Offenders, *Justice* requires it, if an innocent Person is allowed to take their *Place*, and suffer Penalty in their *Stead*. And this is the Fact in this Case. 4. If it is said, that this is not to be allowed of; I grant it is not among Men. Neither, 5. Is it allowable for Men to require an innocent Person to suffer any bodily Pains, much less Death, as a Condition of Pardon to the Guilty. 6. If it is said, that God proceeded in this Affair, *merely* on the Ground of his *absolute Dominion and Sovereignty*, or without Respect to Justice, then it must be granted, that the Death of our Lord had no *Fitness* in it to procure either a Declaration and Promise to forgive Sin, on certain Conditions, or Remission itself. God might have willed his Death, if Sin had never entered into the World, and without any Design of pardoning Sin, or of saving one Sinner.

**IX.** *I conclude, therefore, says he, that the Sacrifice of Christ was truly, and properly, in the highest Degree, and far beyond any, other, PIACULAR and EXPIATORY, to make Atonement for, or to take away Sin. Not only to give us an Example; not only to assure us of Remission; or to procure our Lord a Commission to publish the Forgiveness of Sins; Out moreover to obtain that Forgiveness, by doing what God in his Wisdom and Goodness judged fit and expedient to be done, in order to the Forgiveness of Sin; and without which he did not think it fit or expedient to grant the Forgiveness of Sin.* Answ. 1. Christ did not bear sin, as he thinks. 2. Nor suffer Punishment. Nor, 3. Make Satisfaction for Sin. And, therefore, (1). He did not bear away Sin, or remove our Guilt. *Nor,* (2). Obtain the Forgiveness of Sin. Neither, (3). Answer any Demand of the Law and Justice of God for our Sin. Consequently, (4). The Death of Christ was no more than a Condition or Cause, (*sine qua non*) without which God would not pardon our Crimes, not on Account of any Fitness therein to procure Remission for us; but he willed his

Death, unto that End, because it was his Pleasure; and to make a *Shew* of great Kindness to us, in delivering him up to Death; whereas, in Fact, there was not any at all. For there was, it seems, no *Fitness* in his Death to bring Glory to him, in pardoning Sin, nor to procure the Benefit of Remission for us. If there was a *Fitness* in his Death to obtain that great End, Delivering him up to Death for us would justly be considered, as an *amazing* Act of Kindness, Grace, and Mercy; but, as this is *absolutely* denied, the Transaction of his Sufferings, was *merely arbitrary*, and without any Reason, other than the *absolute* Will of God; without the least Necessity, either in Respect to his own Glory, or our Good and Happiness. And, therefore, this Language is only calculated to deceive and impose upon us, of which the *Author* cannot be insensible. For which Reason it justly deserves a *severe* Censure. He presents us with a *piacular* and *expiatory* Sacrifice, without Sin being borne, or the least Degree of Penalty suffered by him, who became that Sacrifice; and he pretends, that Atonement is made for our Sins; but the Charge of our Guilt still lies upon us, we are as much as ever obnoxious, before God, to Condemnation, and full as liable to suffer eternal Vengeance, as if that Sacrifice had not been offered, and shall as certainly descend to Hell, if we do not procure for ourselves a Right to Impunity and Life, by our own Works, as if our Saviour had not suffered. The Effect of Christ's Death is only a *conditional* Grant of Pardon; the Removal of our Guilt, and our Right to Impunity, are the proper Effects of our Repentance and future Obedience. Our Repentance and Reformation are of *infinitely greater Value* than the Death of Christ, for that only availed to obtain a Declaration, or Promise from God to pardon Sin but they have a *Fitness* in them to procure Remission *itself*, according to the Principles of this Author.

## CHAPTER 6 - OF THE EFFICACY OF CHRIST'S DEATH

MR. *Taylor*, in his Ninth Chapter, corrects our Mistakes about the Efficacy of the Death of Christ.

**I.** *The Design of it could not be to make God merciful; or to dispose him to spare and pardon us, when, as some suppose, so great was his Wrath, that, had not Christ interposed, he would have destroyed us. This is directly contrary to the most plain and certain Notions of Divine Goodness, and to the whole Current of Revelation; which always assures us, that the pure Love of God to a sinful World, was the first Mover and original Spring of the Whole of our Redemption by Christ, John 3:16. All that Christ did and suffered, was by the Will and Appointment of God: And was conducive to our*

*Redemption, only in Virtue of his Will and Appointment*, Hebrews 10:7; John 5:30- John 6:27-38. Answ. 1. None suppose, that the Design of the Death of Christ was to make God merciful, or to procure a Disposition and Will in God to shew us Mercy. 2. He does not seem to understand what Divine Anger against Sin and Sinners is; it is not a *Passion*, but a holy *Displeasure* with both, necessarily arising from the infinite Purity of his Nature. God can no more suffer Sin to go unpunished, than he can disapprove of and neglect Innocence. As he necessarily loves Holiness, so he necessarily hates Sin, and his Will to punish it is necessary, though free; if it was not, he might decree to permit his Creatures to sin against him eternally, without suffering Punishment. 3. Infinite Love to poor Sinners provided and gave Christ to be a Saviour to them, as the whole Gospel testifies, with this infinitely wise Purpose, that Divine Resentment against Sin might be fully manifested, as well as the Glory of rich Grace be displayed, in their Remission. *God set forth his Son to be a Propitiation, to declare his Righteousness.* 4. Those Notions which Men entertain, and please themselves with, of the Exercise of Divine Goodness towards guilty Creatures, without a proper Provision for the Glory of Divine Justice, are *mere Dreams*, and infinitely dishonourable to God. 5. It is most false, that all that Christ did and suffered was conducive to our Redemption, only in Virtue of God's Will and Appointment. (1). If this is true, then there was no *Fitness* in the Death of Christ to obtain the Pardon of sin, any more than there is in the Death of a *Brute*. Then, (2). This was not a wise Constitution. Wisdom would chuse a moral *Mean* that hath a *Fitness* in it to attain the End disigned. (3). Then God might have willed the Death of Christ without any Intention to pardon Sin and save Sinners. For, if there is no *Fitness* in his Death to procure Remission, God certainly might have decreed his Death, without appointing it to be so much as a Condition, or Cause, (*sine qua non*) of the remission of our Sins. And who knows but he did? (4). The Scriptures he refers unto, do not in the least suggest this. They express, that what Christ did was the Will of God; but are far from giving any Hint, that the Virtue and Efficacy of what he did, or suffered, is owing unto the Will and Appointment of God. To scruple the Uprightness of the Author in the Interpretation of Scripture, probably, might displease him; but he must excuse me, that being allowed in his Favour, if I shall say, that his Ability for this Service is far below that of a common Reader.

**II.** *Nor can it be true, that by his Sufferings he satisfied Justice, or the Law of God. For it is very certain, and very evident, that Justice and Law can no otherwise be satisfied, than by the just and legal Punishment of the Offender. — Law in its own Nature must always condemn the Criminal; and Justice, acting according to Law, must*

*precisely inflict the Punishment.* In the Margin he says, *by Justice, in this Case, is not meant Justice, as it is an Attribute in God, or that Branch of his moral Rectitude, which we call Righteousness; but Justice stinted and directed by Law commanding Duty, and denouncing Penalty in Case of Transgression. Here, therefore, Justice and Law come to the same Thing; only Law is the Rule, and Justice is Acting according to, or the Execution of that Rule.* Answ.

1. It is the Holiness and Righteousness of God, which wills Good to be done, and Evil to be avoided, and which ordains that Sin shall expose the Creature to, or bring him under an Obnoxiousness unto Penalty. 2. Law is the Expression of the Divine Will in all these Respects, or the Constitution of Divine Righteousness. The Law, therefore, springs from Justice and Holiness: Or, it is Justice, which gives Being to the Law, and not the Law which gives Being to Justice. 3. Is Justice, which is stinted and directed by Law, something in God? If it is, then it must be either a Divine Purpose or Perfection. It cannot be a Purpose or Decree of God, because God must then immutably will the Destruction of a Sinner; neither can it be any Divine Perfection, because, then, God would not be at Liberty to act towards any Criminal, otherwise than the Law directs, and the Salvation of a Sinner must be absolutely impossible. And, therefore, 4. Justice must mean something *out of God*, and what that is, Mr. Taylor knows not, nor can declare. It is a *Non-ens*, there can be no such Thing. 5. God necessarily, though freely, wills to punish Sin. 6. It is Matter of Liberty and free Choice with him either to punish Sin in the Offender, or in a Surety, who agrees to bear his Sin and fuller its Demerit. 7. The Infliction of Penalty on the Sinner's Sponsor, is the Execution of Justice on, or against Sin; and his Sufferings, if they have a Sufficiency of Worth in them, arising from his personal Dignity, are satisfactory both to Law and Justice. And such were the Sufferings of our Saviour, who is God as well as Man. 8. Unless these Things are granted, we must deny that the Rectitude and Righteousness of the Nature of God is exercised and displayed, in punishing Sinners themselves, or in pardoning and saving them by Jesus Christ. There is no Discovery of the Holiness of God, in the most wonderful of all his Works, if Sinners are pardoned and saved, without Regard to Justice and the Law in their Redemption.

**III.** *Nor will the Notion of Christ's Dying in our Stead, Paying an Equivalent, or Suffering a vicarious Punishment, bear the Test of Scripture or Reason. Because this Notion never enters into the Notion of Atonement by Sacrifice.* Answ. 1. It is freely granted, that there was no *Equivalent* in *legal* Sacrifices. 2. They could not, nor were intended to take away Sin, in a *spiritual* Sense. 3. The Death of Christ was designed to that great End, and it had a *Fitness* in it to answer that important and glorious End. 4. The Author with equal

Truth might say, that the Notion of Christ's taking away Sin, in a *spiritual* Sense, will not bear the Test of Scripture; because that Notion never enters into the Notion of Atonement by Sacrifice. As the Death of Christ effected that which *legal* Sacrifices could not effect: So there was that in his Death, which was not in any or all of them, *viz.* a *Fitness* to take away Sin. If we are not to limit our Notions of the Efficacy of the Death of our Saviour, by that Virtue which attended those Sacrifices; neither must we limit our Nations of the Value of his Sufferings, by that Worth which was found in them. In those Sacrifices there was no *Fitness* to take away Sin: In the Sacrifice of Christ there was such a *Fitness*. And in them there was not an *Equivalent* to make Compensation for Guilt; but in the Death of Christ there was an *Equivalent*, and it was *satisfactory* to the Justice and Law of God.

**1.** *Law and Justice can never admit of one Man's Dying in the Stead of another, or of his Suffering the Punishment, which in Law and Justice is due to the Offender only.* Answ. 1. The Whole is granted, as to Men. But, 2. Surely God may do that which Men may not. He had Power over the innocent *Jesus*, and might will, that he should bear our Sin, and suffer for it. Christ had Power *over* himself to put himself in our Place, to take upon him our Guilt, and to consent unto the Suffering Punishment for us. His Father's Will was, that he should, and he voluntarily agreed so to do, and hath received an ample and satisfactory Reward of the Father, for this his Submission unto his holy, sovereign Will. And, therefore, there is no Injustice in this Procedure, Here was no Exercise of *unlawful* Power in God: No Violence offered to our Saviour, nor was his Consent required unto that, which he had not a proper Right to comply with. For *he had Power to lay down his Life, and Power to take it again.* Nor is that Reward with-held from him, which it was *fit* he should receive upon accomplishing the Will of the Father, in this wonderful Affair.

**2.** *Punishment may be considered as just and fitting; but I cannot conceive how it should be a Sacrifice of a Sweet-smelling Savour,* Ephesians 5:2, *pleasing and grateful unto God – much less such unequitable Punishment.* Answ. 1. He seems to grant, that Punishment, *i.e.* for Sin, is *just and fitting*; but I am apprehensive, that he will not abide by this Grant, in Favour of our Principles; because, *it stabs his own to the Heart.* If Punishment for Sin is *just and fitting*, it becomes God to inflict it, and not suffer Sin to go unpunished. Nor, indeed, can he, for he can no more omit to do that, which is *just and fit* to be done, than *he is able to deny himself.*

**3.** His Want of Capacity to discern the Nature of heavenly Mysteries is not the least Objection to their Truth, though he is, it seems, a *Master in Israel.*

The Sacrifice of Christ was pleasing to God, not considered, merely, as he, in Offering of himself, suffered Penalty; but as he so did, with a holy Submission to his Will, with a View to his Glory, and the Salvation of his People. 4. Because there was that Value in the Sacrifice of Christ, resulting from the infinite Dignity of his Person, as the Father's Equal, which renders it *fit* to answer all the glorious Ends of his *eternal Love, infinite Wisdom, and inflexible Justice*, in the Business of our Salvation. 5. This was not *unequitable* Punishment, for it was on Account of, and for Sin, And God had Power to will, that Christ should bear our Guilt, and undergo those Sufferings which we were liable unto, as Sinners. Christ took our Guilt upon himself, and freely consented to endure those Penalties, which were due unto us.

**4. Vicarious Punishment or Suffering, (in which, upon this Scheme the Efficacy of Christ's Death for the Remission of Sin solely consists) gives us too low Ideas of the Sufferings of the Son of God, as it sinks them to the Pain and Sufferings of a Malefactor, the very meanest Idea we can have of them. He suffered, as if he had been the Criminal, the Pain and Punishment, which we, or equivalent to that which we, the real Criminals, should have suffered; or he was executed by the Hand of Justice in our Stead. A Representation quite too low and insipid, for an Affair concerted in the Council of God, and accomplished by his only begotten Son.** Answ. 1. As it was in the primitive Age of the Christian Church, so it is now, in Respect to the Doctrine of the Cross. The Reason of which is clear, *the deep Things of God* are what they always were, and the Nature of Man is still the same; and, therefore, we need not wonder, if we hear some Men pronounce them *low, mean, and insipid*. I confess, that this is, in my Opinion, a very *corroborating Proof* of the Divine Verity of our Principles. If *heavenly Mysteries* retain their own Nature, and Men continue to be what they formerly were, we must expect them to express the same Language, concerning those *Mysteries*, which others have done before them. 2. Our Blessed Saviour, in himself, was innocent, or *holy, harmless, and undefiled*, and he was so reputed, or no otherwise considered, as in himself. 3. It was no Dishonour to Christ to bear our Guilt, and suffer that Punishment in our *Stead*, whereunto we were obnoxious, in Obedience to the Will of the Father; except it may be deemed a mean Thing in Christ to *magnify the Divine Law and make it honourable*; and to glorify his Father, in all his infinite Perfections, by accomplishing a Design, wherein, above all others, the Glory of his Grace, and Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, and Justice illustriously shines. 4. I am under no Surprize at all at this Author's boldly Asserting, that this was an Affair too *low and insipid* to be concerted in the Council of God, and accomplished by his only begotten Son. For it is no Wonder to

me, that some Sort of Persons dare to affirm, that *the Wisdom of God is FOLLY*. I wish them to consider, that, *if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are LOST*: And that those, to whom *the Doctrine of the Cross is Foolishness, PERISH*.

5. *This Notion, as it includes the Imputation of our Sins to Christ, and of his Righteousness, or Fulfilling of the Law, to us, supplies, Consequences very hurtful to Piety and Virtue: And some Christians have actually drawn such Consequences from it.* Answ. This is a false Charge, and is *mere Calumny*. For, 1. The Imputation of our Sins to Christ, in order to his suffering Punishment, that we might be pardoned and saved in a Way becoming all the Perfections of God, shews us clearly the Malignity of Sin, how hateful it is to God, and is a most persuasive Motive to excite us to forsake every Evil. 2. The Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ to us, and our Justification in the Sight of God, by Virtue of it, is a glorious Instance of rich Grace and Mercy, and is a full Evidence that such is the infinite Purity of the Nature of God, that he cannot justify a Sinner, as considered in himself; which influences us to *adore* his Kindness and Compassion to us in Misery, and to *loathe* ourselves on Account of our Imperfections and Sins. 3. This Doctrine by no Means infers, that we may enjoy future Happiness without present Holiness. A Title to eternal Life renders not a *Meetness* for it unnecessary. 4. Justification by the Righteousness of Christ dissolves not our Obligation to Duty. For, though we are not under the Law, as a Covenant, to obtain Life by our Obedience to it, yet we are as much as ever, and in its *full Extent*, under it, in its Precepts. 5. Those Men who approve of Duty, *only* as the Reward of Life may be expected of God, for their Attendance to it, whatever they think of themselves, I am bold to affirm, have not a *Dram* of Holiness in them. 6. They are not Christians who turn the Grace of God into *Lasciviousness*: Or who draw Consequences from this Doctrine hurtful to Piety and Virtue, though Mr. *Taylor* is pleased to call them so. God forbid, that we should ever esteem them Christians, who can dare *to sin*, that *his Grace may abound*. Nothing more contrary to Christianity can be conceived, than that dreadful Impiety is. 7. Some Men, even now, give sad Evidence, what *blasphemous* Thoughts, concerning the Holiness, Justice, and Grace of God, will spring up in their *cursed* Minds, when they will justly suffer his *dreadful*, but *righteous* Vengeance, for their Crimes.

He adds, 6. *That the Preposition υπερ, when applied to Christ's Dying for us, doth not signify in the Place or Stead of, I have shewn in my Paraphrase upon the Romans, in the Note upon Chap. 5:7. Nor doth the Preposition αντι, imply that Sense in those Texts, Matthew 20:28. Λυτρον αντι πολλων, a Ransom for many,* 1

Timothy 2:6. Αντιλυτρον υπερ παντων, a Ransom for all. Αντι, indeed, doth signify, in the Place or Stead of, in such Phrases as these, Life for Life, Tooth for Tooth, by Way of Retaliation, or just Punishment. But, that it also signifies for, on Account of, for the Sake of, in Favour of, will appear to any one who consults a good Lexicon. [See Ephesians 5:31;

Hebrews 12:2; Matthew 17:27.] And, therefore, in such Phrases as λυρον αντι ψυχης, where Redemption or Ransom is spoken of, it may signify, and I conceive doth signify, no more than a Ransom for, or on Account of Life, to preserve it from being destroyed. And in this Sense our Lord may very properly be said to give himself a Ransom for all, i.e. to redeem them from Death, or to atone for those Lives which we had forfeited: Which is the true Sense of the Place.

Answ. 1. We allow, that the Preposition (*υπερ*) for, frequently signifies on Account of, or for the Sake of, or in Behalf of. 2. That it is used to express Substitution, or in Stead of, cannot be denied, and Socinus himself, allows that it is so used. This is its Sense, in these Texts, (*ινα υπερ σου διακονη μοι*) that in thy Stead he might minister unto me (Philemon 1:13). (*Δεομεθα υπερ Χριστου*) we pray you in Christ's Stead (2 Corinthians 5:20). 3. And this must be the Sense of it, in these Words, (*γενομενος υπερ ημων καταρα*) being made a Curse for us (Galatians 3:13), which cannot be denied, without directly contradicting the Apostle, and saying, Christ was not made a Curse. 4. Our Saviour was made Sin, he died for us, considered as Sinners, and on that Account obnoxious to Death. He died for our Sins. *He was delivered for our Offences*. His Death is our Ransom or Price of Redemption. And by it he obtained eternal Redemption for us. Which Things fully evince, that he was our Substitute, and suffered in our Stead. 5. Christ did not hazard, but lay down, or actually resign his Life for us. The Author's Paraphrase and Note, therefore, are a bold Corruption of the Text, as the Reader, if he pleases, may see (Romans 5:7).

And with Respect unto the Preposition (*αντι*) for, 1. I grant that, it is sometimes used, when *Substitution* is not intended, as when it is put to express Opposition. But, 2. He very well knows, that it properly expresses *Substitution*, and signifies in the *Place* and *Stead* of. In this Sense the Septuagint use it a great many Times. 3. Christ gave his Life, as a *Ransom*, or *Price of Redemption*, unto God, our righteous Judge, for us, and, therefore, he died in our *Stead*, or suffered in our *Place*. 4. I dare say, that our *Author* cannot express *Substitution*, in Language *more proper*, than in that which is used in Relation unto the Death of Christ for us. And, therefore, 5. He ought to assign some very *cogent* Reasons, for his explaining away that

Sense, in Respect unto the Affair of Christ's Death. But, as to Reasons for it, he has none, only his *Dislike*, that God should fix upon such a Method to glorify himself, in the Salvation of Sinners. A Method it is infinitely wise, for herein God displays the immense Riches of his Grace towards our Persons, and his infinite Abhorrence of, and Detestation against our sins. And this is that which such Sort of Men, as our *Author* is, cannot patiently bear with. *If the Almighty will not save Sinners without taking Vengeance on Sin, or without a Regard to the Honour of his Law and Justice; this Sort of Men, will dare to reproach him to his Face, and pronounce his wise Procedures mean, low, insipid, and unworthy, and yet pretend unto great Uprightness and Sincerity at the same Time.*

## CHAPTER 7 -OF SANCTIFICATION, AS A FRUIT OF CHRIST'S DEATH, ETC.

MR. *Taylor* having, as he thinks, entirely demolished the Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin, by the Death of Christ: He proceeds to discourse concerning his Sufferings, as a Mean of our Sanctification, and, in that View, as a Condition, or Reason with God, of our Remission. Wherein, I confers, he is very *rhetorical*. His Ideas are infinitely below the *Sublimity* and *Grandeur* of the Subject, but his Expressions are lofty and very *florid*. The intelligent Reader will easily perceive this *material* Difference between the Divine Writers and our *Author* on this *Topic*. They convey noble Sentiments, in Language suited to the Nature of the glorious subject; Mr. *Taylor* presents us with *low* Thoughts, in a *pompous* Dress. A few brief Remarks, on this Part of his Performance, will sufficiently discover, that it may justly be said to him, *Thou art (Vox, and praeterea nihil) Words, and nothing else*. I am no Enemy to *Rhetoric*, nor would I detract from the due Praises of any Excellency, which I am not capable of imitating. But, if *Rhetoric* is not animated by *Logic*, or sound Reasoning, and good Sense, as the *Soul* of it, I esteem it no other than a *pretty Jingle*, calculated to please less discerning Minds. A *glib Tongue* and a *flowing Pen*, not directed by a good Understanding, in my Opinion, are Accomplishment not much to be admired.

I. He speaks of the Dignity of the Person of our Saviour: And says, *When I consider, that a Person of so transcendent Eminence and Excellency, who was in the Form of God, and in the highest Degree of Glory and Felicity with the supreme Father; of such Wisdom and Power, that by him he made the Worlds; of such Splendor and Majesty, that he was the Brightness of God's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, etc.* But in order to prevent our entertaining an

Opinion, infinitely too high, of the personal Dignity of Christ: Or lest we should imagine, that he is the Father's Equal; he attempts to obscure that illustrious Testimony to the important Truth of our Lord's Equality with him: *Who, being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God (Philippians 2:6),*

i.e. as he says, *like to God*. And in the Margin he observes, that the Phrase, (το ειναι ισα Θεω) to be equal with God, is the same as (ΙΣΑ ΘΕΩ), (Ισοθεος), (Θεος ως) *like God, or as God*, and answers to the Hebrew (כָּלְחִים) Zechariah 12:8. *The House of David shall be as God.* To which I answer, as a learned Author does, that, *with the Greeks, (το ειναι junctum ισα), is most significant. Perfect Equality cannot be more fully expressed, than it is by that Phrase.* The Instances, with which he would make it parallel, express *Likeness*, but this *Equality*. Mr. Taylor paraphrases: *He did not regard the Dignity and Glory, which he had with the Father, as Soldiers do the Spoil and Plunder, which they take by Force, and resolutely hold against all the World.* Answ. 1. The Apostle says, Christ did not think, esteem, or account it *Spoil*. Mr. Taylor says, *he did not regard it*, that is, *he did not forcibly hold it, as Soldiers do their Plunder*, between which the Difference is as wide, as it can be. 2. The Apostle, in this Phrase, asserts the Dignity of our Saviour. Mr. Taylor interprets it of his Condescension, which is as directly contrary to the Intention of the sacred Writer, as any Thing can be. In his *Notes on Romans 9:5*, he first observes, that the Power delegated to Christ by the Father, over all Things, *is his supreme Godhead*. Not content with that *depraved Interpretation* of the Phrase: *Who is over all, God blessed for ever:* He ventures at a bold Corruption of the Text. It seems *what this Part of Christ's Character, has to do with the Jews, is not to him very clear.* Nor, can he conceive, *why the Apostle neglected to mention, in this Place, the Jews Relation to God, as their God. How could he overlook the main Article in this List, i.e. of their Privileges?* In order to supply this Defect, and to wrest the Words from our Saviour of whom they are spoken, he delivers this Conjecture, that there is a Transposition in the Text, viz. thus, (ο ων for ων ο) i.e. *who is, for whose is*, and so he applies the Phrase to the Father: *Whose is the God over all.* Thus, says he, *the grand Privilege will be inserted to Advantage, and stand at the Top of a lofty Climax, rising from the FATHERS, to CHRIST, to GOD.* Probably, our Author may be much pleased with this *ingenious Conjecture* of his; since he fancies, that it throws such admirable Beauty on the Apostle's Discourse. But it falls out very unhappily for him, that this grand Privilege is the first mentioned, the Apostle begins with it in the 4th Verse: *To whom pertaineth the Adoption, which is expressive of the Jews Relation unto God.* And,

Mr. *Taylor* discerned this, when he wrote his Paraphrase, for in that he thus speaks on the Words: *Dignified with the Character of the Sons and First-born of God*, (*Exodus* 4:22; *Jeremiah* 31:9;

*Hosea* 11:1). We must, therefore, conclude, that he had forgot his Paraphrase, when he wrote his Notes. If that had occurred to his Thoughts, it would have prevented him assigning this Reason for his *bold and daring* Corruption of the Text. Again, it is absurd to suppose, that a *limited* and *precarious* Being is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image, or Character, of his Person. It would not be so far from Truth to say that a *Glow-worm*, is the *Brightness* of the Sun's Splendor, and the *Character* of his dazzling Rays. I am bold to affirm, that God is not capable of giving Existence to a Creature, unto whom those Things are properly applicable. God is eternal, all-knowing, all-wise, almighty, supremely good, absolutely immutable, etc. No voluntary Production is eternal, unlimited in Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, Power, or immutable, nor can be in its Nature, yea, it may cease to be at all. And such a Being Mr. *Taylor* thinks Christ is. Besides, Creation is not a Work of almighty Power, if it was effected by the Agency of such a Being as Mr. *Taylor* imagines our Saviour is.

The Fact is undoubtedly this: Either Creation was wrought by the Power and Wisdom which *reside* in the Father: Or by the Power and Wisdom which *reside* in Christ: If by that Wisdom and Power which reside in the Father; then the Wisdom and Power, which *reside* in Christ had no more Efficiency, in the Production of all Things, than the Wisdom and Power of Mr. *Taylor* had. And, if the Creation was effected by the Wisdom and Power which *reside* in Christ, that is not a Work of infinite Wisdom and Omnipotence, but it is the Effect of finite Wisdom and limited Power. The *old Philosophers* were not greater *Fools*, who *professed themselves to be wise*, than those among us are, who reject evangelical Mysteries; for they advance most evident *Absurdities*. God cannot give a Sufficiency of Wisdom and Power to any Being whatever, to create a World; the Reason is as clear as the Sun. Infinity is not *communicable*; if it was, God might produce his Equal, which he can no more do, than he can become *finite*. I am sure, I say nothing here, but what agrees with the *peerless* and *incomprehensible* Perfections of my almighty Creator; and I express these Things, with a View to vindicate his Glory, to assert the true Dignity of Christ, and to expose the *Stupidity* of *Arianism*, which at this Time is greatly spreading amongst us, with all other *detestable* Errors. For my Part, I am fully resolved never to own any Person whatever, as my Saviour, who is *finite* in his Nature, *mutable* in his Being, *precarious*, and *may cease to be*; such a God Mr. *Taylor* would fain persuade us to believe Christ is. Those may so

do, who imagine, that *infinite Wisdom, Power, Merit, and Compassion are not Requisites in a Saviour*, and who can be content to trust in themselves, and their own Obedience, for Pardon and Acceptation with God in Judgment. From which I pray the good Lord, of his Mercy, eternally to deliver *my poor perishing Soul*.

**II.** Mr. Taylor observes, that *God's granting Remission of Sin, through the Blood of Christ, is the properest Way to affect our Minds with the Malignity of Sin, and to shew us how odious and detestable all Sin is to God*. Answ. 1. He allows not, that God does grant us Remission of Sin, through Christ's Blood, though he thus speaks. For, his Opinion is, that the Death of Christ procured *only* a Declaration or Promise from God to pardon Sin; and that we must, by our own Works, acquire a Right to Remission. 2. If the malign, odious, and detestable Nature of Sin is seen, in God's requiring the Death of Christ, *only* as a Condition of giving a Promise to pardon; it is infinitely more discovered, in the Infliction of proper Punishment, for Sin, on Christ in Dying; and, therefore, our Opinion of the *penal Nature of his Death*, according to his own Reasoning, bids much fairer for Truth, than that which he advances does. If it is an Instance of Divine Wisdom to pardon Sin in such a Way, as the Malignity, odious and detestable Nature of it to God, may be seen: Surely, it is reasonable to conclude, that it is the *wisest and fittest* Method to dispense Pardon, in such a Way, as most clearly discovers God's Abhorrence of it. Now, whether *only* Requiring that Christ should die, without enduring Penalty in his Death: Or the Infliction of Punishment on him, in Dying, in order to the Remission of Sin, more fully discovers its Malignity and evil Nature, may, I think, be safely left to the Determination of any unprejudiced Person, who hath the least Discernment in the Things of God.

**III.** He says, *How forcibly, far beyond any abstract Reasonings, do these Considerations, viz. God's delivering up Christ for us all, etc. urge us to love God and our Saviour, to devote our all to his Honour? etc.* Still our Opinion hath the Advantage infinitely above his. For, surely, every one must see, that it is a greater Instance of Love to suffer a *penal Death*, than it is *barely* to die, or without enduring Divine Punishment in Dying. And, consequently, our Obligations to God and the Redeemer are far greater, on our Principles, than it can be thought they are, upon those of Mr. Taylor: Therefore, that there is, at least, a great Probability of the Truth of our Opinion, and of the Falsehood of his, the Nature of his own Reasoning evinces. But the Reader must observe, That, though he uses *swelling Words*, he is very *low* in Sense and Meaning. Some Men have an *admirable Knack* of expressing themselves, in a *lofty* Manner, when they convey exceedingly low Ideas, which I can

never prevail with myself to admire, on any Subject. Such a Way of discoursing on this, which is of all other Subjects the most glorious, important, and astonishing, I heartily despise; because it is calculated to deceive, and cause weak People to imagine that a Sense is intended, which is agreeable to its Nature, whereas nothing is more remote from, or contrary to the Design of the Person himself. Nor is Mr. *Taylor* insensible of this.

**IV.** It is granted, that *Christ was an Example to us in Suffering*; but not as he bore Sin, suffered for it, and was made a Curse, to redeem us from the Law's Curse; in neither of these Views, is he proposed to us an Example these Things are peculiar to him, in the Character of the Redeemer of the Church of God. Yet, we freely allow, that, from this glorious Pattern of Meekness, Love, and Zeal for the Honour of God, we may learn *Usefulness, Love, Humility, Condescension, Trust in God, Mortification of fleshly Lusts, Patience, Meekness, and Fortitude under Sufferings, Deadness to the World*, as Mr. *Taylor* observes. And I think, that he is not so *stupid*, as not to discern, that our Opinion furnishes us with these Advantages, in a Degree, at least, equal with his own.

Faith in Christ is not, it seems, *a Reliance or Dependence on his Blood and Righteousness for Pardon and Acceptance with God; but it is the Attention of our Minds fixed upon him*, as our Example, whereby we become like him, in our Temper and Behaviour; and, being so, on that Account, we have a Claim upon God for the Remission of our Sins, and the eternal Salvation of our Souls. This it is to be baptized into Christ's Death. This it is to eat his Flesh and drink his Blood, in the Institution of the Lord's Supper. And this is Approaching to God through Christ's Blood with Boldness. These Things are not true, and I am bold to affirm, that they agree not with the Experience of a single Christian, in the whole World. Indeed, it is not to be expected of Men, after they have destroyed the Fundamentals of Christianity, to give us a true Account of Christian Experience. Mr. *Taylor* ought not to take it amiss, that I am so very brief in my Remarks here; because, though he throws out a *Flood of Words*, he expresses *very little* Matter. Which, I confess, is a Way of Writing not at all grateful to me.

**VI.** The Death of Christ is the Cause of our Sanctification. (1). *Meritoriously*: For, 1. His Sufferings and Death were required, by the Divine Father, of him, as a Condition of communicating Grace to us, to sanctify our Hearts and make us meet for Heaven. (*Isaiah 53:10*.) 2. He, therefore, may claim the Communication of Grace to us, unto that great End, as a Debt due to him (*Romans 4:4*), according to the Reasoning of the Apostle, in the Place referred to. (2). *Influentially*: As his Blood is applied to our Consciences, by the

Blessed Spirit, it assures us of the Remission of our Sins, and effects in us an Abhorrence of Evil, and a Desire of perfect Conformity to him, in every Branch of Purity and Holiness. Hence, the Divine Writer to the *Hebrews* thus prays in their Behalf: *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen* (*Hebrews 13:20, 21*).

## APPENDIX

MR. Taylor's Recommending a Pamphlet, intitled, *Second Thoughts concerning the Sufferings and Death of Christ*, excited in me a Desire to read it. Upon the Perusal of it, I quickly perceived, what was the Reason of his Recommendation. The Author wholly explains away, and, as he thinks, evinces the Absurdity of the Doctrine of Atonement, by the Blood of Christ, or of Salvation through his Sufferings and Death, as the *meritorious Cause* of it. My narrow Limits will not allow me to enlarge, in animadverting on this Performance.

**I.** I would observe that some Principles want Proof, which the Author takes for granted, and upon which the main of his Reasoning is founded, and, therefore, his Superstructure which he hath built upon them, will no more stand than a Castle erected in the Air. They are these.

**1.** Unblemished and perfect Holiness is not necessary to an Interest in the Approbation and Favour of God: Or, God can account a Person righteous, who is, at least, in some Degree, unrighteous. For, he allows, that no Character in human Life is unmixed or perfect. **2.** There is a *Fitness* in Repentance and Reformation to procure the Pardon of Sin: Or to regain an Interest in the Favour and Approbation of God. Although a Man hath been, through the Course of his Life, *luxurious, incontinent, perfidious, oppressive, fraudulent, rapacious, cruel, proud, envious, wrathful, malicious, revengeful, or brutal and diabolical in his Disposition and Behaviour; hath neither feared God, nor regarded Men*: Such is the *intrinsic Value and Worth* of Repentance, that it will justly fit him for the Pardon of all his aggravated Guilt, and procure him a Title to Happiness.

**3.** Repentance is in the Power of every Sinner. Or no Criminal whatever needs *Supernatural Strength* to bring him to repent of his

Sins, and to practise that Virtue, which will recommend him to the Approbation and Favour of his Maker.

**4.** The Death of Christ is not the Cause of Repentance in any Sinner, and, consequently, it was not at all necessary unto the Being of Repentance.

**5.** *The Justice of God is only Goodness, acting under the Direction of his Wisdom for the Good, i.e. the Happiness, of the Creation, though apostate and corrupt. And, therefore,*

**6.** The End of the Infliction of Punishment must be the Good and Happiness of the guilty Creature. This is a most pleasing Representation of Divine Justice, for this will never leave us without a Ground of Hope of Deliverance from Misery, let our Guilt be ever so heinous and accumulated.

**7.** Divine Love to Men follows upon their Love to God and Goodness: Or,

*they become amiable, and then God loves them.* **8.** *The Communication of all personal Worth or Merit is impossible.* I suppose he means, what Christ did and suffered cannot possibly be imputed to us.

*Answ.* 1. Personal Worth may intend inherent Powers and Perfections: These always reside in their proper Subject, and cannot be transfused into another. But, 2. If he means the Obedience of Christ: to the Law and Will of God, we allow, that is not communicated, or transfused into us, nor can be. Yet, 3. It is imputed to us, or placed to our Account. This is a Grant of his Righteousness to us. And, 4. God sees that Righteousness to be ours, not *inherently*, indeed, but by gracious Imputation. 5. Thereupon, he accepts, or justifies us. In no other Sense can it be said, *that Righteousness is imputed without Works.*

The Author hath not given the least Proof of the Truth of these Principles, either from Revelation or Reason; but takes them all for *self-evident* Principles, which need no other Confirmation, than their own evidencing Light, which he thinks sufficient to gain the Consent of every one who considers them. But I must crave Leave to withhold my Assent from them all, until he shall be pleased to offer something for their Proof.

**II.** I proceed to consider, what the Author asserts and argues for, from these unproved Principles. And,

**1.** He thinks, That *the Justice of God cannot require a Satisfaction for the Sins of sincere Penitents, because sincere Repentance certainly renders them the Objects of Divine Favour and*

*Approbation. This is with him a most insuperable Difficulty.* Answ. 1. He supposes, that Repentance might be without a Satisfaction made for Sin. This I deny, and affirm, that Repentance is the Effect of the Satisfaction of Christ, nor can he prove the contrary. 2. Repentance procures not Divine Love, nor does it render a Person a fit Object of a justifying Act of God.

**2.** *Another Difficulty arises from the Representations of that Severity of Justice, which makes an Expiation necessary. — Every sin deserveth God's Wrath and Curse, both in this World and that which is to come. — It is an infinite Evil, and requires Satisfaction of infinite Value; and God cannot pardon any Sin without a Satisfaction. — Such a Severity shocks my Imagination.* Answ. 1. Every Sin deserveth God's Wrath and Curse for ever. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* 2. Sin is an infinite Evil objectively, or as it is committed against an infinite Object. But I expect, that some Sort of Men will soon dare to say, that Sin committed against God, is not attended with greater Demerit, than Sinning against a Creature is. For, though they pretend, that Reason is their Religion, they argue upon religious Principles, as if they had really lost their Reason. 3. There is no Weight at all in his Imagination being shocked. For it is common with some to think, that *God is unrighteous who taketh Vengeance*, of which Number there is too much Reason to fear, that he is one: *I cannot reconcile it to infinite Goodness*, says he. And what if he cannot? That is no Objection of the least Importance. Is the Exercise of punitive Justice towards a criminal Creature incompatible with Divine Goodness? By no Means; if it is, punitive Justice cannot be exercised at all, for it is not possible to God to act inconsistently with any of his Perfections.

He proceeds to object unto his being brought into that State, wherein he finds himself, if it is so, that every sin deserveth Punishment; and is *very severe*, if not *impious*, in the Manner of expressing himself. *This one might dread from a malevolent Being.* Horrid, indeed! *But is not to be expected under the Administration of the original, essential, perfect, and unchangeable Goodness, which gave Birth to the Universe, with an Intention of communicating Happiness to the Creatures in it.* And concludes thus: *It would have been as fully consistent with the Goodness of my Maker to have made me what I originally am, out of the Earth, as to make me what I am, as a Descendant from Adam.* The Apostacy of Adam, therefore, can be no just Reason, why his Descendants should be placed in unhappy Circumstances.

Our present Situation is entirely withdrawn from the Bar of Justice, and is wholly referred unto Divine Goodness, which, as it is said,

designs nothing but the Happiness of the Creature. Infinite Benevolence, therefore, hath determined to give Existence to innumerable rational Creatures, so situated in Consequence of the Sin of him from whom they spring, in their successive Generations, as is certainly followed with the Depravation of every Individual, who continues in Being so long as to be affected by the evil Temptations, which are inseparable from the present State. This Depravation is the Loss of the true Glory and Felicity of the reasonable Creature. This, it seems, is owing to infinite Benevolence. Again, for that is not all, by this Depravation, Men are, at least in Danger of being hurried on through the Force of Temptations, which easily work upon depraved Minds, to act a Part which naturally tends to their everlasting Destruction, and actually much the superior Number of Men, perish for ever. And it seems, that it is the Decree of Divine Beneficence to place them in so *disadvantageous and exceedingly dangerous a State*. Farther, it is the Appointment of the same immense Kindness, that a great Part of the human Species, who are not chargeable with Guilt contracted by another, and have never offended themselves, shall endure *Tortures* which would pierce a *Heart of Stone*, and expire in *dreadful Agonies*. Moreover, it is the Goodness of God which ordained, that so great a Part of Mankind shall be subject to a Train of Miseries in the present State of Things, which the most rigid Virtue cannot possibly defend a Person from, *viz. extreme Poverty, Contempt, Oppression, and vile Cruelty*. This is that *lovely Condition*, which the Goodness of the great Creator hath ordained the human Species unto; for Justice, it seems, hath no Concern at all in this Appointment! Prodigious, indeed! One would imagine that Men, who ascribe this Situation to the Goodness of God, cannot, themselves, believe the *specious Things*, which they express concerning it, nor can possibly have any pleasing Expectations from it, how much soever, to serve a Purpose, they think well to extol and applaud it. But all there Things are act accounted for, by bringing them to the Bar of Divine Justice, unto which alone they can in Reason be referred.

3. A Third Difficulty is, *Innocence cannot be punished. Perfect Innocence can know no Pains of Conscience. Perfect Innocence can have no Apprehension of the Wrath and Displeasure of God*. Answ. 1. If Men may be allowed to express themselves, in what Way they shall think proper, upon a Subject, they may prove or disprove any Thing, It is not Innocence, nor an innocent Person, as so considered, that is punished. But, 1. An innocent Person may bear the Sins of others, or have their Guilt imputed to him. 2. In Consequence of that, suffer Punishment. 3. He hath no Consciousness of having contracted that Guilt, which is placed to his Account. But, 4. He may

have a painful Sensation of the Charge of that Guilt to him. And, 5. Of that Wrath and Displeasure, which the Sin that is imputed to him demerits. 6. A *mere* Consciousness of having sinned is not Punishment, nor does that enter into the Nature of Punishment. For, (1). That is no other than a *natural* Act of the Mind, as it is endued with a Power of Recollection. (2). Such a Consciousness will always be in those who are pardoned, except it is supposed, that they will forget that they once were Sinners; which if they do, then the Benefit of Salvation from Sin, and its Consequences, they can have no Remembrance of. Some, indeed, seem to imagine, that thus it shall be with the Saints in Heaven, but without any Foundation: And unto the total and eternal Eclipse of the Glory of the Grace of God, in our Salvation by *Jesus Christ*.

4. He objects, That *the Ends of Government are not answered, but evaded, by the Punishment of Sin in Christ.* Answ. 1. It is granted, that this Appointment was of the Father, as he says. 2. That Christ did not procure the Love of the Father to Men. His Sacrifice was the Fruit of Divine Love, and not the Cause of it. In order farther to prove, that the Ends of Government are evaded by this adorable Scheme of Salvation, he, (1) Supposes *it was possible, that Christ might not have been willing to die for us.* This is a Supposition of what is not to be supposed. For, 1. The Will of the Father was an Obligation upon Christ in his human Nature, which was that wherein he suffered. 2. As a Divine Person, he assumed that Nature into Union with himself, in order to give it up to Suffering and Death. 3. The Will of Christ's human Nature was wholly under the Direction of the Will of his Divine Nature. 4. He could not but consent unto the Pleasure of the Father, in this Matter; yet his Consent was voluntary, and not forced. (2). He enquires thus: *How could his willing Submission to the Father alter the Case, with Respect to the Ends of Government? It will be confessed, that the Father's giving him up, without a willing Compliance, could not have answered these Ends.* Answ. 1. If Christ had not consented to take our Guilt upon himself, and to suffer Punishment in our Stead, in his Death, he would not have offered himself a Sacrifice to God, nor would there have been any Thing in his Death pleasing to him, as a Sacrifice for Sin, and, consequently, nothing of a *Fitness* in it to atone for Sin: And, of Course, no Display of Justice, but a *mere arbitrary* Act of Violence put forth upon him. 2. How much soever the Author may be pleased with this *bold* Enquiry, it affects himself as well as us: Since he must grant, that, if Christ had not consented unto his Death, nothing of Wisdom, Goodness, and Mercy towards us had been therein manifested.

**5.** The Author thinks, That, *if this Point is of so much Importance, it should be plain and level to every Capacity, etc.* Answ. The deep Things of God are certainly of the greatest Importance; but it don't follow, that, therefore, they are plain and level to any Capacity, especially the Capacities of those, who think, that their Reason is the Standard and Test of Truth. They are the *wise and prudent from whom heavenly Mysteries are hid, and to whom they are Folly and Weakness.*

**6.** He enquires, *What is the Fruit of the Satisfaction of Christ? Is it an Indemnity to the World? No Man says this.* Answ. 1. Christ did not die for the whole human Race. 2. Those who affirm, that he did, deny his *proper and full Satisfaction*, whereof, as I suppose, the Author, was not ignorant. And, therefore, I cannot but consider his Reasoning here, as an Instance of Unfairness and Disingenuity; and his Insult upon it, is very unworthy of him, who gives full Evidence, that he is no Stranger to the Controversies this Matter. Why, therefore, does he with such an *Air of Insult say, Is this an Administration worthy of God? How can Justice have received a full Satisfaction, and yet Satisfaction is to be made again, as if no Satisfaction had been made at all?* He very well knows, I am persuaded, that those who maintain the *universal Extent* of the Death of Christ, do not allow, that his Death was *satisfactory* to Divine Justice for Sin, though he is pleased thus to express himself. 3. I freely grant, that, if the Death of Christ is of *unlimited Extent*, his Death was not *satisfactory* to the Law and Justice of God, for the Sins of any Part of Mankind. If it is once proved, that he died for Men *universally*, it will never be proved, that he made a *proper and full Satisfaction* for the Sins of any one Man in the World. And this the Author, in my Opinion, full well knows.

**7.** He enquires thus: *If their Offences have been fully satisfied for, and a Punishment every Way equal to them actually borne, in what Sense can Pardon be said to be free?* Answ. 1. As he says, *to Sinners it is free.* 2. The Scripture, by free Remission, does not mean Pardon, without Satisfaction, but Forgiveness, without any moving Consideration in the sinner pardoned. 3. It is false which he affirms, that on the Part of the Father, considered as a moral Governor, it can in no Sense be so, i.e. free. For the Father, out of infinite Love to Men, provided and appointed that Sacrifice, by which Satisfaction is made. And, therefore, the Satisfaction his Justice hath received for Sin, is no Objection to the Freeness and Riches of his Grace and Mercy, in pardoning it to the Sinner.

**8.** *After all, could it be proved, that there in any Thing in the Divine Nature, or, in the Thing itself any Expediency amounting to a moral Necessity, which should render it unfit or impossible for God to*

*forgive any, even the least Sin, upon sincere Repentance, without such a Satisfaction, all that hath been said must be given up. But I really despair of seeing that proved.* Answ. 1. The Author supposes, that sincere Repentance might be, without this Satisfaction, which is false, for Repentance is a Fruit of Satisfaction by the Death of Christ. 2. He suggests, that Remission follows upon Repentance, which is not true; a Man's Sins, at least, in *Order of Nature*, are forgiven, before he exercises Repentance. Because God wills not to impute Sin to, a Man, therefore, he gives him Repentance, unto Life. 3. I cannot but apprehend, that he has seen *clear Proof* given of the Necessity of Satisfaction, though, through *Prejudice*, he will not allow of it. If I thought him a Person unacquainted with what hath been written, on that important Subject, I would point out to him, where he might meet with full Proof of this Matter; but, as I am persuaded, that he is one, who has been conversant in Writings of that Kind, I think it entirely needless to refer him to any Writer, on that Subject. Let him review and reconsider what he has read, in Relation to that Point, and if he is not *apostatized* from Truth, through *carnal Reason, Pride, Unbelief, and Contempt of heavenly Mysteries*, probably, he may discern, what, at present, he professes not to do. If he is such a one, I pray *God, to give him Repentance unto the Acknowledging of the Truth.*